

THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY



Vol. XLIV

FALL & WINTER, 1982

Nos. 3 & 4

Published by the

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT

OF

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Published by the
ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT
OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
Montgomery, Alabama

SKINNER PRINTING COMPANY
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CHARTING MOBILE BAY AND RIVER

By

Jack D.L. Holmes, Ph.D., O.I.C.*

No one knows when the first European chart of Mobile Bay was made. Legends about the Welsh "Prince Madoc" who supposedly landed in Mobile Bay in 1170 are exciting, but hardly the substance of which factual history is made!¹ Documented accounts of the voyage by Alonso Alvarez de Pineda along the Gulf in 1519 reveal he spent some time in Mobile Bay careening his ships.² Still, it was not until the closing decades of the eighteenth century that Mobile Bay was charted in an accurate and scientific manner.

True, there were numerous maps and charts drawn up of the Gulf and lower Mississippi Basin,³ but their accuracy was suspect, as noted by a report of French engineers at the time of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803:

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¹For a discussion of the Madoc legend, see Robert R. Rea, "Madogwys Forever! The Present State of the Madoc Controversy," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXX, No. 1 (Spring, 1968), 6-17.

²John Gilmary Shea, "Ancient Florida," in *Narrative and Critical History of America*, edited by Justin Winsor (8 vols.; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1886-1889), II, 237.

³For example, see the essay by Justin Winsor, "Cartography of Louisiana and the Mississippi Basin Under the French Domination," in *ibid.*, V, 79-86; and two articles by Jack D.L. Holmes: "Maps, Plans and Charts of Louisiana in Spanish and Cuban Archives: A Checklist," *Louisiana Studies*, II, No. 4 (Winter, 1963), 183-203; and "Maps, Plans, and Charts of Louisiana in Paris Archives: A Checklist," in *ibid.*, IV, No. 3 (Fall, 1965), 200-221.

"All the maps and plans which have been drawn up to the present time . . . are not, to be exact, anything more than sketches, and they have nothing of the exactitude and precision which might be expected to-day of their labors."⁴

The quality of the early French maps may have been poor, but the engineers made up in quantity what they may have lacked in accuracy. This appears from the extant examples scattered in archives and libraries throughout the world.⁵

Careful cartography won government support from the British, and the charting of Mobile Bay really begins following the occupation of French Mobile in 1763 by the terms of the Treaty of Paris which ended the Seven Years War. For two decades the British remained in East Florida with its capital at St. Augustine and West Florida with the center of government at Pensacola. Mobile was an important population center of West Florida, particularly after the Proclamation of 1763 opened the rich lands to American immigration.

A number of British surveyors and army officers plied their craft in charting the area almost to the eve of the American Revolution. Captain Philip Pittman came to Mobile in the summer of 1763 and was not impressed with what he found:

"Mobile is situated on the banks of the river of that name, just at the place where the fresh and salt waters mix; when the tide goes out it leaves an abundance of small fishes on the marshes which lie opposite the town, and the heat of the sun in summer kills the fish; and the stench of them, of the stagnated water in the neighbouring swamps, and the slimy mud, render the air putrid. To this may be added, that the water of the wells is brackish, and there is none to be found whol(e)some within less than one mile and a

⁴*Ibid.*, 200, quoting from Rosily's "Instructions relatives aux travaux des ingenieurs-geographes de la Louisiana," Paris, le 9 frimaire an II (1803), Archives Nationales (Paris), Colonies, 13-A-Louisiana-51, folios 132-133.

⁵Jack D.L. Holmes, "Maps, Plans and Charts of Colonial Alabama in French and Spanish Archives," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXVII, Nos. 1 and 2 (Spring and Summer, 1965), 7-21.

half of the place. . . ."⁶

Yellow fever and malaria conspired to make life miserable for the British troops in West Florida.⁷ A Scottish physician with the army, Dr. John Lorimer, blamed "misconduct" by the troops on the prevalence of death.⁸ Indeed, several decades later an American officer noted much the same thing among the garrison: "Inordinate use of Ardent Spirits and bad Wine, superadded to high seasoned meats and promiscuous Intercourse with lews Women, will disorder any (but) the most robust Habit of Body."⁹

Dr. Lorimer was an intellectually-curious Scot, a good example of the Scottish Renaissance of the late eighteenth century. For its size, West Florida attracted an inordinate number of these men — William Bartram,¹⁰ Daniel Clark, Sr.¹¹

⁶Captain Philip Pittman, *The Present State of the European Settlements on the Missis(s)ippi* (London: J. Nourse, 1770; facsimile edition with introduction by Robert R. Rea; Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), vii-viii.

⁷Robert R. Rea, "Graveyard for Britons," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLVII, No. 3 (January, 1969), 345-364.

⁸"Extracts of a LETTER from Dr. Lorimer, of West-Florida, to Hugh Williamson, M.C., Read Before the Society, April 21st, 1769," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, I (January 1, 1769-Jan. 1, 1771), 250-251. On Lorimer's contributions to West Florida, see Robert R. Rea and Jack D.L. Holmes, "Dr. John Lorimer and the Natural Sciences in British West Florida," *Southern Humanities Review*, IV, No. 4 (Fall, 1970), 363-372.

⁹(Colonel) John Pope, *A Tour Through the Southern and Western Territories of the United States of North-America; The Spanish Dominions on the River Mississippi, and the Floridas; the Countries of the Creek Nations; and Many Uninhabited Parts* (Richmond: Printed by John Dixon for the Author and his three children, 1792; reprinted, for Charles L. Woodward at New York, 1888), 44.

¹⁰One of the best editions of William Bartram's *Travels Through North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Choctaws; Containing an Account of the Soil and Natural Productions of those Regions, Together with Observations on the Manners of the Indians* (Philadelphia: James & Johnson, 1791), is the Naturalist's Edition, *The Travels of William Bartram*, edited by Francis Harper (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958).

¹¹Clark was Irish, but a close friend of the Scottish surveyors in West Florida. He and Dr. John Lorimer were both elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society on April 21, 1769. Clark's manuscript, "An Account of West Florida," read to that body on February 3, 1769, has apparently disappeared from the APS archives. See William S. Coker and Jack D.L. Holmes, "Daniel Clark's Letter on the Mississippi Territory," *The Journal of Mississippi History*, XXXII, No. 2 (May, 1970), 153-169; and Kent Reilly, "Dr. John Lorimer: Scientist in West Florida," *The Echo* (Pensacola Historical Society), II, No. 4 (Fall, 1981), 2-9.

William Dunbar,¹² John Ellis,¹³ and Dr. Lorimer.

Lorimer described the winds on the Mobile coast:

"Now on this Coast, which is neither the East nor West side of a continent; in winter the Southerly Winds are warm and moist, the Northerly cold and dry: In summer we have the daily sea breeze from the South, and in the night or morning a refreshing gentle land wind from the North. The sky in this country is remarkably serene, especially when the winds are Northerly."¹⁴

Lorimer also commented on the lack of accurate charts of the Mobile coast: "There is no such thing as recommending any map of this country. Bellin¹⁵ and such as have copied from him, give some resemblance of the coast, but they are all erroneous, and that in very material articles."¹⁶ The British officers in West Florida copied from each other's work without a concern for their plagiarism, but they were also supportive of the work of others. Thus, Dr. Lorimer forwarded to the American Philosophical Society a note to the effect that Mobile Bay and other rivers in West Florida were then being charted by a fellow-Scot, George Gauld. "If Mr. Gauld's surveys are not soon published, he will possibly send a copy of them for your Society, but he is just now so engaged that he cannot set about such a work."¹⁷

George Gauld drew up one of the earliest accurate charts

¹²Jack D.L. Holmes, "William Dunbar," in *Lives of Mississippi Authors, 1817-1967*, edited by James B. Lloyd (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1981), 144-146, which corrects some of the errors in Eron Rowland (Mrs. Dunbar Rowland), *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar of Elgin, Morayshire, Scotland, and Natchez, Mississippi, Pioneer Scientist of the Southern United States* (Jackson: Press of the Mississippi Historical Society, 1930).

¹³Robert R. Rea, "The King's Agent for British West Florida," *The Alabama Review*, XVI, No. 2 (April, 1963), 141-153.

¹⁴Lorimer's letter from Pensacola, January 7, 1769, as published in the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*. See *supra*, note 8.

¹⁵Jacques Nicolas Bellin (1703-1772) was a naval engineer who drew up plans for the Gulf Coast during the 1740's. See Woodbury Lowery, *A Descriptive List of Maps of the Spanish Possessions Within the Present Limits of the United States, 1502-1820*, edited by Philip Lee Phillips (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), 286-287.

¹⁶Lorimer to Williamson, January 7, 1769.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

of Mobile Bay in 1768. Some two centuries later one of his descendants described the reconnaissance of the Gulf Coast as based on the manuscript George Gauld sent via his friend Dr. Lorimer to the American Philosophical Society. He also submitted a map of Mobile Bay¹⁸ which details locations of people, places and things. Gauld was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society, apparently on two separate occasions! On January 19, 1770, he was named with Joseph Ellicott, whose remarkable brother Andrew, drew the thirty-first parallel Southern Boundary as we shall see below. Again, on January 21, 1774, he was re-elected to membership along with Bernard Romans, both men claiming Pensacola as their home.¹⁹

Whatever his connection with that distinguished body of learned men, Gauld made his own mark, although at least one of his colleagues was unimpressed with Gauld's description of the rivers of West Florida. Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton, one-time president of the society, and a specialist in bees and poisonous honey in North America, borrowed Gauld's manuscript between November 4 and 18, 1803. Apparently, he was the unidentified person who wrote across the manuscript, "This largely uninteresting Paper can hardly obtain a Place in the Transactions of a Philosophical Society. It should however be preserved in the Files for the Use of Historians or Map makers."²⁰

Gauld's description of Mobile Bay is superb for its time, and it is difficult to reconcile Barton's harsh appraisal with the result:

¹⁸George Gauld, "A General Description of the Sea-Coast, Harbours, Lakes, Rivers &c.^a of the Province of West Florida, 1769," Manuscript Collection, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Vol. 917.59/G 23. Permission to publish portions was extended to this author by Gertrude D. Hess, Associate Librarian, on December 8, 1969, two centuries after Gauld penned his remarks! This manuscript has been summarized with biographical notes in Charles A. Gauld, "A Scottish View of West Florida in 1769," *Tequesta*, XXIX (1969), 61-66.

¹⁹American Philosophical Society, *Early Proceedings of the A.P.S. for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge Compiled by One of the Secretaries from the Manuscript Minutes of its Meetings from 1744 to 1838* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1884), 48, 86-87.

²⁰Gauld's manuscript, as cited above, note 18. Apparently, Gauld did not share Barton's views. On May 24, 1776, he petitioned West Florida's Governor Peter Chester for a land grant on the east branch of Pearl River as reward for his surveys: Gauld to Peter Chester, Pensacola, May 24, 1776, manuscript in the Huntington Library (San Marino, California), HM 1580.

"The Land here," he wrote, "and to the Eastward as far as [the] Bay of Mobile, is swampy towards the Sea, with a clay bottom for 2 or 3 miles back, but afterwards it is cover'd chiefly with Pines, Life Oak, and Hickory, and the soil is sandy, or gravelly for several miles, before it becomes truly fit for culture, but it is good for Pasturage, and where the inhabitants are industrious may turn out advantageously."²¹

Gauld went on to describe the two islands Massacre and Dauphin then separated by five miles but at one time, prior to a hurricane's destructive fury, had been joined. "These two Islands are supposed formerly to have been but one, which went by the name of Massacre, so called by Monsieur d'Ibberville from a large heap of Human Bones, found thereon at his first landing [in 1699], but afterwards it was called Dauphin Island, in honour of the Dauphin of France, and to take of(f) the disagreeable idea implied by the other name."²²

Gauld knew the literature of travel along the Gulf and he cites the Jesuit explorer/historian Father Pierre Francois Xavier de Charlevoix, as well as Le Page du Pratz who had written about the Mobile Bay area. Since Gauld's description has not been published, it seems appropriate to quote extensively from his survey of Mobile Bay:

"The deepest water on this, which is the Bar of Mobile, or rather Mobile Bay (for there is another Bar at the entrance of the River near the Town) is only 15 or 16 feet. The mark for going over it in the deepest channel, is to bring little Pelican Island well on with the Bluff on the East end of Dauphin Island, bearing about N.N.W. $\frac{3}{4}$ W. and then steer in for the Key in that direction. The Point of Mobile bears from the Bar nearly due North 4 miles and the Kay (sic) is

²¹Gauld's manuscript, cited in note 18.

²²*Ibid.* The role of Dauphin Island in early Alabama history has been noted by Jack D.L. Holmes in several articles: "Dauphin Island," in *Encyclopedia of Southern History*, edited by David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 329-330; "Dauphin Island in the Franco-Spanish War, 1719-22," in *Frenchmen and French Ways in the Mississippi Valley*, edited by John Francis McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), 103-125; and "Dauphin Island's Critical Years: 1701-1722," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXIX, Nos. 1-2 (Spring and Summer, 1967), 39-65.

more than a mile and a half within it, Both the East and West Reefs, as well as the Bar itself are steep towards the Sea, there being from 3 to 7 and 8 fathoms immediately without: this occasions a constant swell with a heavy Sea when it blows from the Southward, and therefore in rough weather it would be imprudent to attempt to go over it in a Vessel that draws above 10 or 11 feet Water.”²³

Gauld described the approach to the town of Mobile and the general configuration of Mobile Bay:

“From Mobile Point to the Town the distance is almost 11 Leagues nearly due North, and the breadth of the Bay in general about 3 or 4 Leagues, at the lower part of it is a deep that runs about 6 Leagues to the Eastward of the Point, having a narrow Peninsula between it and the Sea; The River Bon Secour falls into the Bottom of this Bay or Bight, and Fish River with that of *Le Saut* on the North side of it, on all which there are several Habitations.

“On the West side of the Bay of Mobile there are likewise, some small Rivers but none considerable, besides La Riviere aux Poules [Fowl River] by which there is a small inland communication to the Westward abovementioned and Dog River, which falls into the Bay about 9 miles below Mobile, has 5 or 6 feet in the Entire River and is Navigable for a Boat several miles back into the Country.

“With regard to the general depth of Water in the Bay there is from 3 to 2 fathoms two Thirds of the way from Mobile Point towards the Town, and the deepest water to be depended on in the upper part of the Bay is only 10 or 12 feet, and in many Places not so much; but there is no Danger, as the Bottom is a soft mud. Large Vessels cannot go within 7 miles of the Town. Notwithstanding all these inconveniences in Point of Navigation, Mobile having been the Frontier of the French Dominions in Louisiana, always was, and still is a very considerable place. It has a

²³Gauld's manuscript, cited in note 18.

small regular Fort formerly Fort Conde now called Fort Charlotte build of Brick, and a neat square of Barracks for the Officers and soldiers, the Town is pretty regular, of an oblong figure, on the West Bank of the River where it enters the Bay. Several of the Richest of the French Inhabitants left Mobile on its being given up to the English, but a great many still remain in the Town, and at their Plantations on the River, and on both sides of the Bay."

After Gauld mentioned that Mobile Bay ended "a little to the N.th ward of the Town in a number of Marshes and Lagoons, which subjects the People to Fevers and Agues in the Hot Seasons," he turned to a rather complete account of the Mobile River:

"The River of Mobile is divided into four Principal Branches about 40 miles above the Town; one of which called Tansa [Tensaw today], falls into the East part of the Bay; the other empties itself close by the Town where it has a Bar of 7 feet; but there is a small Branch a little to the Eastward of this, called Spanish River, where there is a Channel of 9 or 10 feet, when the Water is high, but this joins the River about 2 Leagues above the Town."

Gauld continued to describe the hydrography of the Mobile and Alabama River systems which included the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers where the French Fort Toulouse was located. Thence to the north by northwest the Tombigbee River boasted two major forts, that of San Esteban de Tombecbe built in 1789 and abandoned as being north of the thirty-first parallel in 1799, and Fort Confederacion, located on the site of the old French Tombigbee fort and the English Fort York, which had been abandoned in 1767.²⁴ Gauld con-

²⁴*Ibid.* A useful survey of the French colony and its forts in the interior of Alabama is the dated, but reliable essay by Andrew McFarland Davis, "Canada and Louisiana," in *Narrative and Critical History of America*, edited by Justin Winsor (8 vols.; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1886-1889), V, 1-78. On the Spanish forts, see Jack D.L. Holmes, "Notes on the Spanish Fort San Esteban de Tombecbe," *The Alabama Review*, XVIII, No. 4 (October, 1965), 281-290; and "Up the Tombigbee with the Spaniards: Juan de la Villebeuvre and the Treaty of Boucfouca (1793)," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XL, Nos. 1-2 (Spring-Summer, 1978), 51-61.

cluded his description of the almost-pristine wilderness of Alabama:

"The River is navigable for Sloops and Schooners about 35 Leagues above the Town of Mobile. The Banks where low are partly overflowed in the Rainy Seasons,²⁵ which adds greatly to the Soil and adapts it particularly for the Cultivation of Rice; the sides of the River are cover'd in many places with large Canes, so thick that they are almost impenetrable; there is also plenty of Red, and White Cedar, Cypress, Elm, Ash, Hickory and various kinds of Oak; several People have lately settled on this River who find the Soil to answer beyond expectation."

Gauld's surveys of Mobile Bay remained in manuscript form, although two of his Atlantic surveys were published after his untimely death on June 8, 1782.²⁶

In 1779 Spain declared war against England with the avowed aim of driving British ships and settlers from the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.²⁷ Following the August and September campaigns in the vicinity of Baton Rouge, the British surrendered Natchez and the following year, 1780, launched a full-scale expedition against the British Fort Charlott

²⁵Gauld's manuscript, cited in note 18. On flooding, see Jack D.L. Holmes, "Observations on the 1791 Floods in Alabama," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XL, Nos. 3-4 (Fall-Winter, 1978), 119-126.

²⁶In a sketch of Gauld's work written by Dr. G.L. Mowat in 1943, and accompanying Gauld's manuscript, is the notation that the surveyor was buried in the chapel in Tottenham Court Road, London, with the following on his tombstone: "George Gauld, A.M., Surveyor of the Coasts of Florida, &c. Born at Ardrbrack, in the parish of Botriphny, Banffshire. Died in London, June 8, 1782, age 50." William Faden published in London in 1790 Gauld's *An Account of the Surveys of Florida, &c. with Directions for Sailing from Jamaica or the West Indies by the West End of Cuba, and Through the Gulph of Florida, to Accompany Mr. Gauld's Charts*, but this does not include Gauld's survey of Mobile Bay. In 1796 Faden published the other posthumous work, *Observations on the Florida Keys, Reef, With Directions for Sailing Along the Keys. . . .* The most recent study of Gauld, which summarizes the Mobile Bay notes of the British mariner, is Captain John D. Ware, *George Gauld, Surveyor and Cartographer of the Gulf Coast*, revised and completed by Robert R. Rea (Gainesville and Tampa: University Presses of Florida, 1982), 96-103. A portion of Gauld's charts showing Mobile Bay is in Plate VII.

²⁷Royal Order, "Declaration of War Against His Britannic Majesty," Aranjuez, May 18, 1779, Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla), Papeles procedentes de la Isla de Cuba (hereafter cited as AGI, PC), legajo 569.

at Mobile.²⁸ One of the career naval officers serving under General Bernardo de Galvez during the Mobile Campaign was Pilot first-class Jose Antonio de Evia. While chasing a British ship both Evia and his adversaries ran aground in Mobile Bay and Evia had first-hand knowledge that the British charts were less accurate than the pilots demanded. Accordingly, after the war was over and the British had been driven from the Gulf by the 1783 peace treaty,²⁹ Galvez sent Evia on a reconnaissance of the entire Gulf of Mexico, which he completed in 1786.³⁰ Descriptions of Evia's 1784 exploration of Mobile Bay do not differ markedly from those of Gauld, but he does give valuable landmarks suitable for careful navigation. As time worn on and pilots became more experienced, there were fewer shipwrecks along the coast of "Nueva Florida."³¹ This was owing to the surveys of Gauld and Evia.

By far the most accurate and careful charting of Mobile Bay and River was done by the joint Spanish and American boundary commission in 1799. With the signing of the Treaty of San Lorenzo or Pinckney's Treaty of October 27, 1795, more than a decade of dispute between Spain and the United States concerning the southern boundary and joint navigation of the Mississippi River seemed to be settled. Spain named a long-time Natchez adjutant, born in Pennsylvania but then a Spanish vassal, as commissioner, Stephen Minor.³² William

²⁸The traditional account of Galvez, John Walton Caughey, *Bernardo de Galvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783*, facsimile of 1934 edition with foreword by Jack D.L. Holmes (Gretna, La.: Pelican, 1972), has been up-dated by the following: J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1975); J. Barton Starr, *Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1976); and F. de Borja Medina Rojas, *Jose de Ezpeleta, Gobernador de la Mobila, 1780-1781* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1980).

²⁹Tratado definitivo de Paz. . . . Versailles, September 3, 1783, copy printed at Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1783, in Archivo General de la Nacion (Mexico, D.F.), Reales Cédulas, Vol. CXXVI, fols. 40-117. Article V refers to West Florida's cession.

³⁰Jack D.L. Holmes (ed.), *Jose de Evia y sus reconocimientos del Golfo de Mexico, 1783-1796*, Vol. XXVI, *Coleccion Chimalistac de Libros y Documentos acerca de la Nueva Espana* (Madrid: Ediciones Jose Porrua Turanzas, 1968), 7-8; and Jose de Ovia and His Activities in Mobile, 1780-1784," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXXIV, No. 2 (Summer, 1972), 107-108.

³¹The term "New Florida" for Mobile Bay was used by Commandant Enrique Grimarest, who succeeded Jose de Ezpeleta at Mobile, in a dispatch to Bernardo de Galvez, Mobile, December 31, 1781, AGI, PC, leg. 1330.

³²Jack D.L. Holmes, "Stephen Minor: Natchez Pioneer," *Journal of Mississippi History*, XLII, No. 1 (February, 1980), 17-26.

Dunbar served as Spanish astronomical surveyor.³³ President George Washington appointed Andrew Ellicott and Thomas Freeman as commissioner and surveyor respectively.³⁴

The joint boundary commission established the initial point of the thirty-first parallel at a mound called "Union Hill" and located near Clarksville in May, 1798.³⁵ The expedition then cut their laborious way through the Mississippi and Alabama cane thickets to Thompson's Creek and the Pearl River. By March, 1799, Ellicott and Minor were busy checking their calculations and adjusting the line as far as the Mobile River. It was not a happy job, as indicated in one of Minor's letters:

"Since my last of the 18.th ultimo we have been busily employed in making the necessary observations to ascertain the true point of Latitude on this River, Mr. Ellicott with the large sector and myself with the small one; we have not finished yet owing to the number of cloudy nights we have had; the weather is now fine and if it continues we shall finish in 4 days. — We are however sufficiently advanced to know that the line will pass this river at the lower end of a Bluff on which the family of the Chastangs live and a widow of the name of Narbon about 31 miles above Mobile by water and 21 on a direct line, — a small distance below is another very handsome high Bluff occupied by a Madam(e) Augustin [Rochon] as a Vauchery.—³⁶

"... On the 1.st of July this River and the Tenesa [Tensaw] overflowed their banks which is a swamp of ten miles wide and continues to be so some distance beyond S.^t Estevan and from what the Inhabitants tell

³³*Supra*, note 12.

³⁴Jack D.L. Holmes, *Gayoso, The Life of a Spanish Governor in The Mississippi Valley, 1789-1799* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press for the Louisiana Historical Association, 1965), 173-189, 233-235.

³⁵Jack D.L. Holmes (ed.), "William Dunbar's Correspondence on the Southern Boundary of Mississippi, 1798," *Journal of Mississippi History*, XXVII, No. 2 (May, 1965), 187-190.

³⁶Stephen Minor to Manuel Gayoso de Lemos, Camp on Mobile River, April 3, 1799, AGI, PC, leg. 2371. On these and other settlers of the Tensaw-Tombigbee Valley, see Jack D.L. Holmes, "Alabama's Forgotten Settlers: Notes on the Spanish Mobile District, 1780-1813," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII, No. 2 (Summer, 1971), 87-97; and "The Role of Blacks in Spanish Alabama: The Mobile District, 1780-1813," in *ibid.*, XXXVII, No. 1 (Spring, 1975); 5-18.

me the Rivers will not be within their banks before the first of May, and the Swamps will remain impassable untill Aug.^t We shall therefore be obliged to pass our Horses over in Boats by a rout(e) of at least sixteen Miles by Water. — We have also been obliged to make large openings on both sides of this Swamp on the High Lands, build large fires, hoist up flags, as signals in order to ascertain the true course of the line and the distance across, which by the help of the astronomical circle we have accomplished. —”

Ellicott had joined Minor on the boundary line where they set their instruments on March 18, “when a course of observations was begun, and completed on the 9th of April following.” He added his comments on the difficulties “we met with in carrying the line over the Mobile swamp,” and referred to the appendix to his work.³⁷

While historians have depended too heavily perhaps on this *Journal* of Andrew Ellicott, the errors in the published version have caused subsequent difficulties. One illustration shows in connection with the so-called “Ellicott Stone.”

³⁷Andrew Ellicott, *The Journal of Andrew Ellicott, Late Commissioner on Behalf of the United States During Part of the Year 1796, the Years 1797, 1798, 1799, and Part of the Year 1800: For Determining the Boundary Between the United States and the Possessions of His Catholic Majesty in America, Containing Occasional Remarks on the Situation, Soil, Rivers, Natural Productions, and Diseases of the Different Countries on the Ohio, Mississippi, and Gulf of Mexico, with Six Maps, Comprehending the Ohio, the Mississippi from the Mouth of the Ohio to the Gulf of Mexico, the Whole of West Florida and Part of East Florida. To which is Added an Appendix, Containing All the Astronomical Observations Made Use of for Determining the Boundary, With Many Others, Made in Different Parts of the Country for Settling the Geographical Positions of Some Important Points, with Maps of the Boundary on a Large Scale; Likewise a Great Number of Thermometrical Observations Made at Different Times and Places* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1803; reprint edition, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1962), 198. This standard source for Ellicott's work on the commission is flawed in several ways, necessitating the consultation of records in the U.S. National Archives, Record Group 76. A manuscript in Ellicott's own hand with marginal corrections by him was given Albert Gallatin by Andrew Ellicott in 1801-1802, along with Ellicott's map of Mobile Bay and his unpublished manuscript “observations of the Rivers Mississippi, etc.” Gallatin explained the importance of having borrowed Ellicott's material in a letter to Secretary of State Martin Van Buren, February 18, 1830, N.A., R.G. 76, “gray box:” when the British burned the capitol during September, 1814, the originals of Ellicott's materials were presumed lost. Thus, the National Archives has preserved in the Ellicott Papers of Record Group 76 what are some of the most important documents in early American history.

Erected by the joint boundary commission in 1799, it is the only surviving monument to their labor. An attorney from Mobile who spoke at the dedication of a marker nearby on U.S. Highway 43 some twenty-one miles North of Mobile, noted that the "Ellicott Stone is the origin of all the land surveys in the southern part of Alabama and Mississippi." But in his published remarks, Jack C. Gallalee quotes from the Journal's appendix and says, "Ellicott's recollection is at fault regarding the spelling of Dominios and Carlos on the stone."³⁸

In the appendix the printer has rendered Ellicott's account as follows:

"... marked on the north side U.S. Lat. 31° 1799,—and on the south side DOMINOS de S.M.C. CAROLUS IV. Lat. 31° 1799."³⁹

By checking the appendix with Ellicott's dispatch to Secretary of State Timothy Pickering in the National Archives, the correct information is given:⁴⁰

"... marked on the north side

U.S.
Lat. 31°
1799

and on the south side

DOMINIOS DE S.M.C.
Carlos IV. Lat. 31° DE
1799."

The stone was damaged by a falling tree before the protective fence was erected, but it is still possible to see most of the inscription, which is a third variation on the theme!⁴¹

³⁸Jack C. Gallalee, "Andrew Ellicott and the Ellicott Stone," *The Alabama Review*, XVIII, No. 2 (April, 1965), 92-105. The quote is from p. 99, note 16. Gallalee apparently did not use any of the Ellicott material in the National Archives.

³⁹Ellicott, *Journal*, Appendix, 83.

⁴⁰Ellicott to Secretary of State [Pickering], Pensacola, April 21, 1799, National Archives, R.G. 76, Vol. III.

⁴¹Photos by the author, May, 1965. See illustrations.

DOMINIO
DE S.M. CARLOS IV
LAT. 31.^o
1799

U.S.
L(at?) 31^o

In his appendix to the April 21 dispatch to Pickering, Ellicott adds information about the floods and what trouble it caused:

“On our arrival at the end of the guide line on the Mobile River one serious difficulty presented itself: Which was the continuation of the line thro’ the swamps which is at all times almost impenetrable but at this season of the year absolutely so being whol(l)y inundated: But very fortunately we found in the neighbourhood of our camp a small hill the summit of which was just elevated above the lofty trees in the swamp: From the top of this hill we could plainly discover the pine trees on the up-land on the other side. Upon ascertaining this fact we sent a party thro’ to the other side along the water courses by which the swamp is intersected in various directions with orders to make a large fire in the night with light wood, the same was likewise to be done on the hill before mentioned to obtain nearly the direction from one place to the other. — The atmosphere was too much filled with smoke to discover a flag, the woods being on fire on both sides of the swamp. — It happened unfortunately that the day before our fires were to be lighted, the fire in the woods had extended almost over all the high land on both sides of the swamp by which so many dead trees were set on fire that there was no possibility of discriminating between them and our fires. It was then agreed that the parties should light up and extinguish their fires a certain number of times making stated intervals. — This succeeded so well that we became certain of not taking a wrong fire in determining our angles but contrary to our expectation a

heavy rain fell the same night shortly after we had finished the experiment and extinguished all the fires in the woods. —"⁴²

The resulting storm cleared before a stiff breeze and decided the commission on doing their observations by day. Ellicott was a skilled mathematician who had considerable experience drawing boundary lines,⁴³ and he took special pride in how he adjusted the angles and observations to correct the line to the exact measurement of the thirty-first parallel as far as the Mississippi River.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, as Minor and Ellicott sought to correct the line on the Mobile River, a deputy surveyor named David Gillespie went up the Tombigbee River as far as St. Stephens, the Spanish fort established in 1789 to protect the settlers of the Tensaw-Tombigbee valley. The fort was located at 31° 33' 44".⁴⁵ By that time, however, the fort was no longer Spanish: on February 5, 1799 Spanish commandant Fernando Lisoro had turned the keys over Richard Brashear and three days later the soldiers were in Mobile.⁴⁶

The boundary commission continued its work due east until a group of hostile Seminoles stole enough as to resolve Ellicott and Minor on a sea voyage around Florida to the St. Mary's River, where the line was drawn toward the west.⁴⁷ At some time in his journey Ellicott wrote a fascinating account of the rivers in West Florida. It is instructive of the Mobile District shortly before the United States occupied the

⁴²Ellicott to Secretary of State Pickering, April 21, 1799.

⁴³Biographical data on Ellicott may be found in Harrison Griswold Dwight, "Andrew Ellicott," *Dictionary of American Biography*, edited by Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone (23 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's, 1928-1958), VI, 89-90; Mrs. Sally Kennedy Alexander, "A Sketch of the Life of Major Andrew Ellicott," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* (Washington, D.C.), II (1899), 158-202; and Catherine Van Cortlandt Mathews, *Andrew Ellicott, his Life and Letters* (New York: Grafton Press, 1908).

⁴⁴The observations are enclosed in the appendix to Ellicott to Secretary of State Pickering, April 21, 1799; and are printed in the *Appendix* to his *Journal*, 83-84. See illustration.

⁴⁵Holmes, "Notes on Fort San Esteban de Tombecbe," 289. See *supra*, note 24.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷Jack D.L. Holmes, "The Southern Boundary Commission, the Chattahoochee River, and the Florida Seminoles, 1799," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLIV, No. 4 (April, 1966), 312-341.

remaining Spanish territory as far east as the Perdido River.⁴⁸ Its use with the accompanying map by Ellicott reveals much about the early mapping of the Mobile Bay and River.

“The Mobile is a fine large river, and navigable some distance above the boundary for any vessel that can cross the bar into the bay. One square-rigged vessel has been as high as Fort S.^t Stephens in Latitude 31° 33' 44”.

“When the river is low, the tide ebbs and flows several miles above the line, and is sometimes observed as high as Fort S.^t Stephens; but when the river is full, there is but little if any tide above the Town of Mobile. It was in the latter state when I ascended it, and notwithstanding the current being constantly against us, and but little fair wind, we reached the place of our encampment north of the boundary in four days — my vessel was about 40 tons burden. —

“About six miles north of the boundary the Tombeckby, and Alabama rivers unite, and after accompanying each other more than three miles separate: — the western branch from thence down to the bay is called Mobile. — The Alabama retains its name till it joins some of its own waters, which had been separated from it for several miles, and then takes the name of Tensaw which it retains till it falls into the head of the bay. —

“The easiest way from the gulf of Mexico by water into the United States is up those rivers, the navigation of each being equally good. —

“The up-land on those rivers is of an inferior quality from their mouths up to the latitude of fort S.^t Stephens, and produces little besides pitch-pine, and wire-grass; but is said to become better as you ascend the rivers. — The lands on those rivers have notwithstanding had a good character for fertility; but this has arisen from not discriminating between the up-land which is unfit for cultivation, and the banks of the rivers which are fertile in the extreme, and to which agriculture is

⁴⁸Jack D.L. Holmes, “The Mobile Gazette and the American Occupation of Mobile in 1813: A Lesson in Historical Detective Work,” *Journal of the Alabama Academy of Science*, XLVII, No. 2 (April, 1976), 79-86.

almost whol(1)y continued for a number of miles above the boundary. But those lands are subject to a great inconvenience from the inundations of the rivers. —

“Planting is not attempted in the spring till the waters have subsided, and it sometimes happens that inundations follow the first fall of the waters in the spring, and whol(1)y destroy the previous labours of the Planters. — This was the case in May 1799 after the corn was two feet high: But this inconvenience is by no means so great as it would be in a more northerly latitude, — there still remains summer sufficient to bring a crop of corn to full maturity.

“The large swamp thro’ which the rivers meander, is intersected in almost all directions by smaller water courses, which keep up a constant connection between the main branches, — such of them as were used by our people in passing and repassing from one side to the other.

“At the mouth of the Mobile River stands the Town of that name. The situation is handsome, and some of the houses tolerably good, and for a place of its size the trade is considerable. The place is said to be unhealthy during the months of July, August, September and October. —

“The fort stands a short distance below the town, — it is a well built regular work, and was taken from the British by Don [Bernardo de] Galvez during our revolutionary war. — Since that time it has been repaired, and put in a good state of defence by the officers of his Catholic Majesty. —

“From the traverse of the river, the latitude of the Town appears to be about $30^{\circ} 36' 30''$ N. and the longitude 5.h[ours] $52' 17''$ west from the royal observatory at Greenwich.

“The Bay is extensive and supposed to be about 9 leagues in length; but too shoal for large Shipping. — The latitude of the bar at the entrance into the bay from the gulf of Mexico I found by a mean of two good observations to be about $30^{\circ} 12' 30''$ N. and as the course of the bay is nearly north and south

the longitude must be nearly the same as that of the Town."⁴⁹

Charting of Mobile by Andrew Ellicott indicates the progress made in astronomical observation as facilitated by the publication of almanacs on the position of stars in the heaven which formed the guide lines used by Ellicott. The use of the correspondence and miscellaneous descriptions and maps in the Ellicott materials of the National Archives indicates that no serious history of his life and times may be expected until scholars do use them. By an accident of history, his observations on the West Florida rivers happened not to be where they should have been, for that, the map and other observations were loaned to the intellectually-curious Albert Gallatin. An accident of history, or a sign that Clio was at work? Either way, the materials of which history is made were preserved.

⁴⁹Ellicott's map and observations of the Rivers Mississippi are in the National Archives, R.G. 76, Vol. III, and the gray box respectively. The map has been published by Jack D.L. Holmes (ed.), "Fort Stoddard in 1799: Seven Letters of Captain Bartholomew Schaumburgh," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXVI, Nos. 3-4 (Fall and Winter, 1964), 240. See enclosed illustration. The discovery of these letters in the Letter Book of Major Thomas Cushing, in National Archives, R.G. 98, Vol. CLIV, is another example of using a section of archival material to replace that destroyed by the British in 1814.

APPENDIX: LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Plate #1: Galvez captures Mobile, March 1780, Archivo General de Simancas (Spain).
- Plate #2: Jose de Evia's 1784 chart of Mobile Bay and environs, Museo Naval (Madrid), published in Holmes, *Jose de Evia*.
- Plate #3: Andrew Ellicott; portrait in 1799, Mathews, *Life of Ellicott*.
- Plate #4 and #5: Four views of the Ellicott Stone in Alabama and historical marker (photos by Jack D.L. Holmes).
- Plate #7: Corrections made at Mobile and Tombigbee Rivers, (*Appendix* to his *Journal*).
- Plate #7: Corrections made at Mobile and Tombigbee Rivers, 1799 from *Ibid*.
- Plate #8: Corrections made in *Ibid*.
- Plate #9: Ellicott's sketch of Mobile Bay, 1799, U.S. National Archives, R.G. 76, Vol. III, also printed in Holmes, "Fort Stoddard in 1799," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, Fall and Winter, 1964, 240.

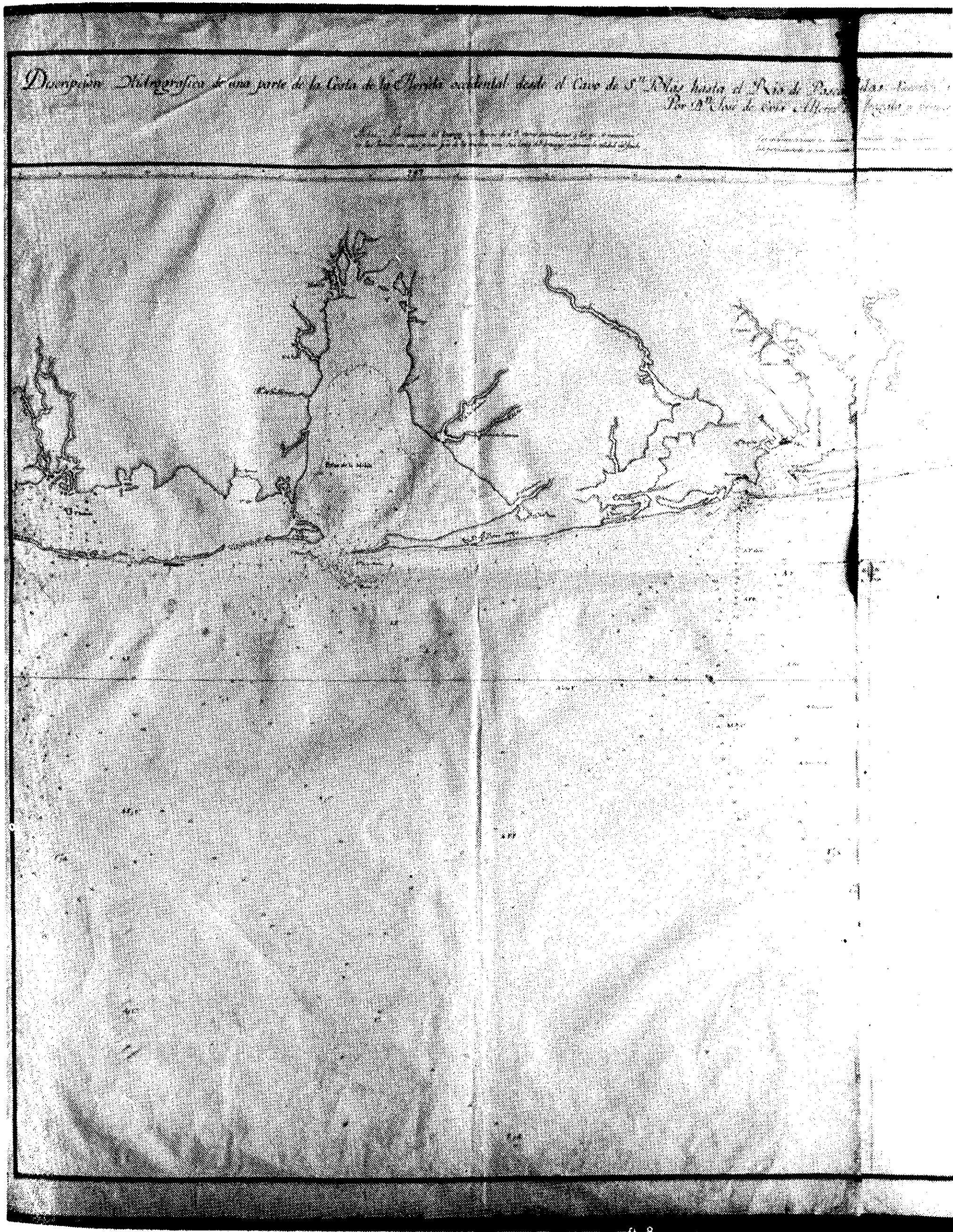
Plano del Rio de la Movila en latitud de 30. grados, y 10. minutos, cuya conquista e igualmente la de su fortificacion y habitaciones se ha echo por el Brigadier y Comandante qual de la Provincia de la Lujiana el 12. de Mayo del 1780. D.ⁿ Fernando de Gaber.

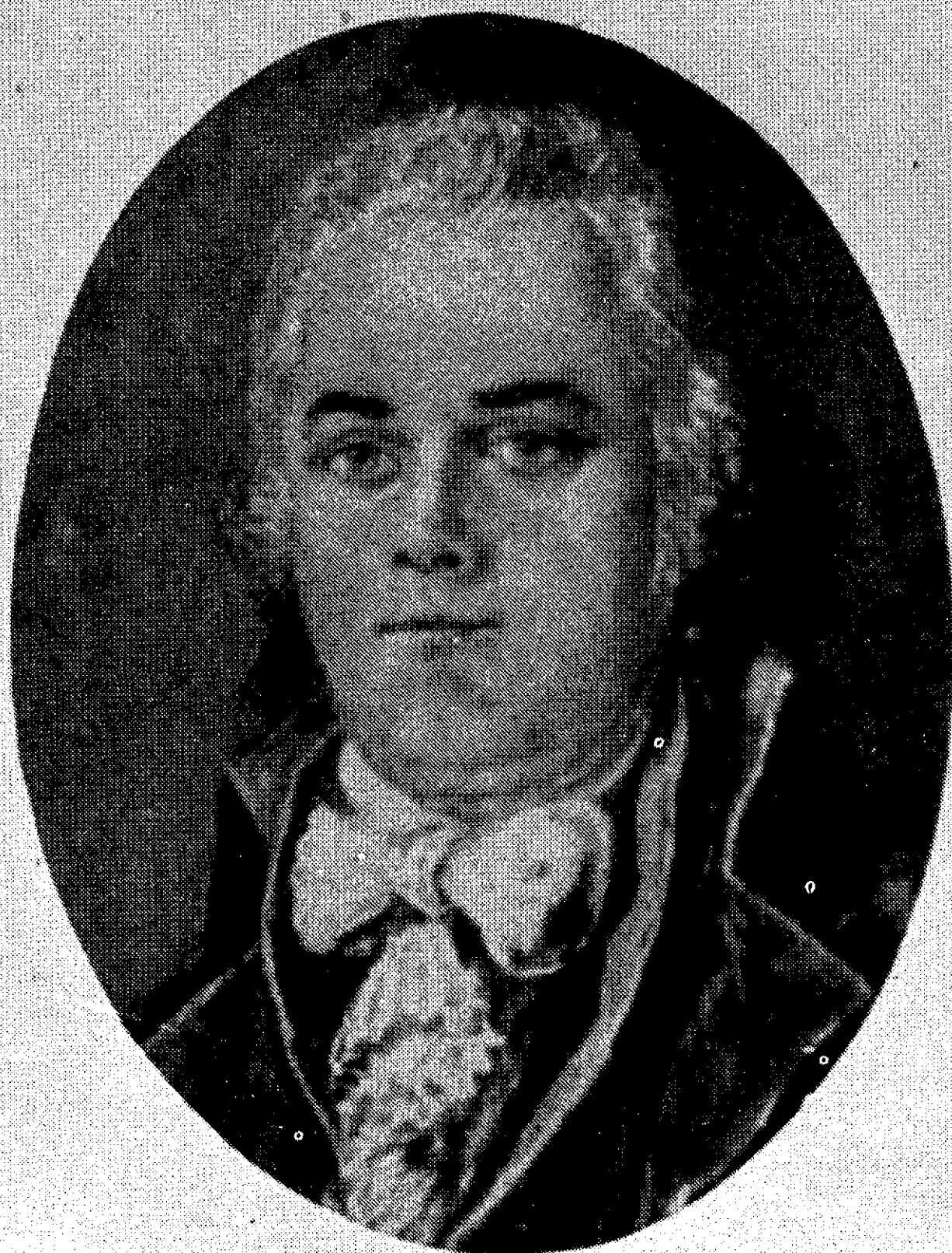
1. Cruzada de 18. pias.
2. Paquetes y sacos perdidos.
3. Freg. el Volante e Ingles perdidos.
4. Errequia de las Cruzadas.
5. Calles del Fin.
6. Freg. el Chombagim, del S. Rio, del S. Jago, y del S. Jago.
7. Cruzada del Tancapum.
8. Cruzada de las Cruzadas.
9. Cruzada y Peltacion.
10. Rio de las Cruzadas en las del S. Jago y del S. Jago.
11. Rio de las Cruzadas, 2.^a Cruzada y Campamento.
12. Cruzada Ingles perdida.
13. Cruzada de las Cruzadas y Tancapum.
14. Rio de las Cruzadas.



Escala de Diez Leguas Castellanas.



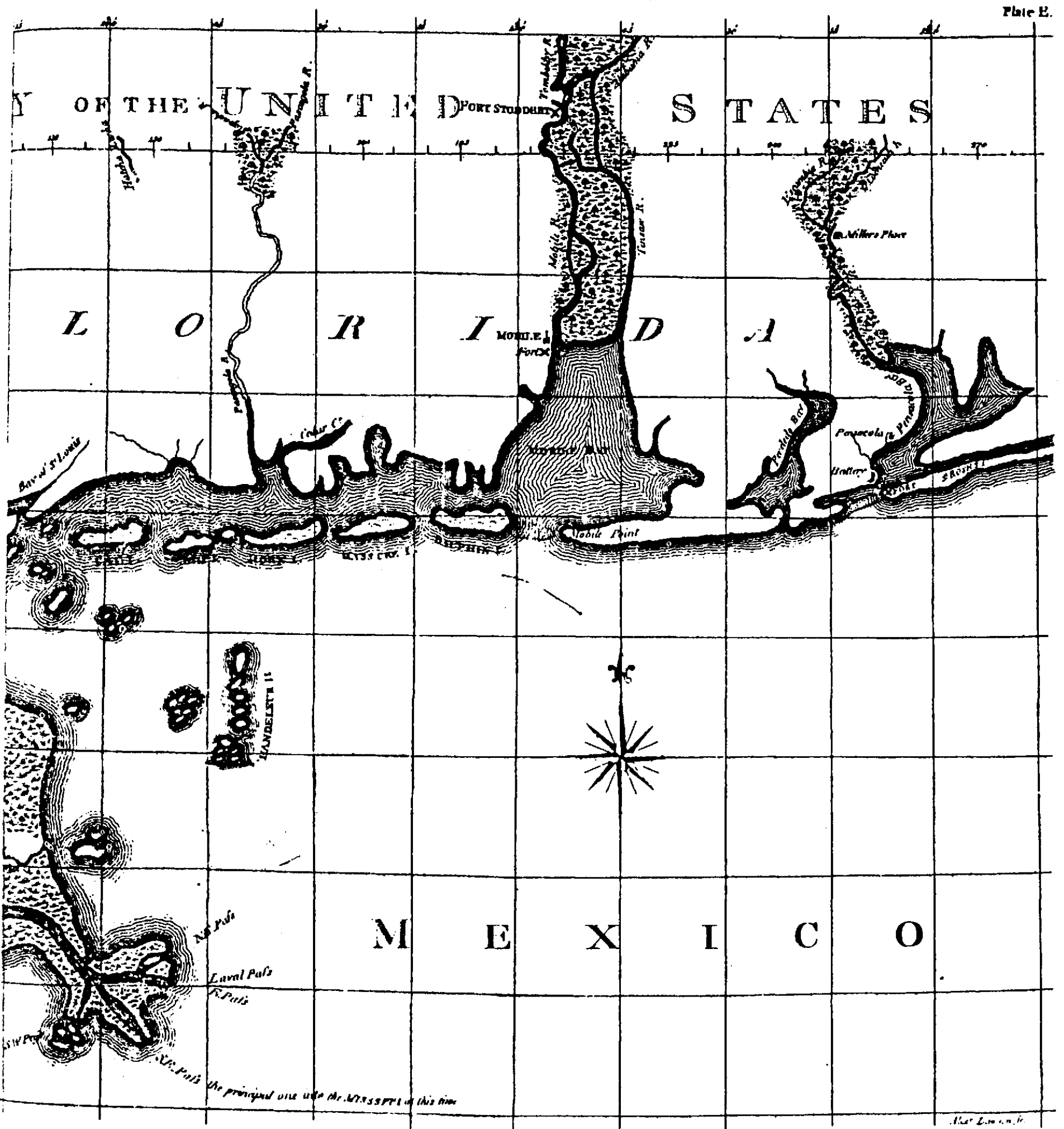




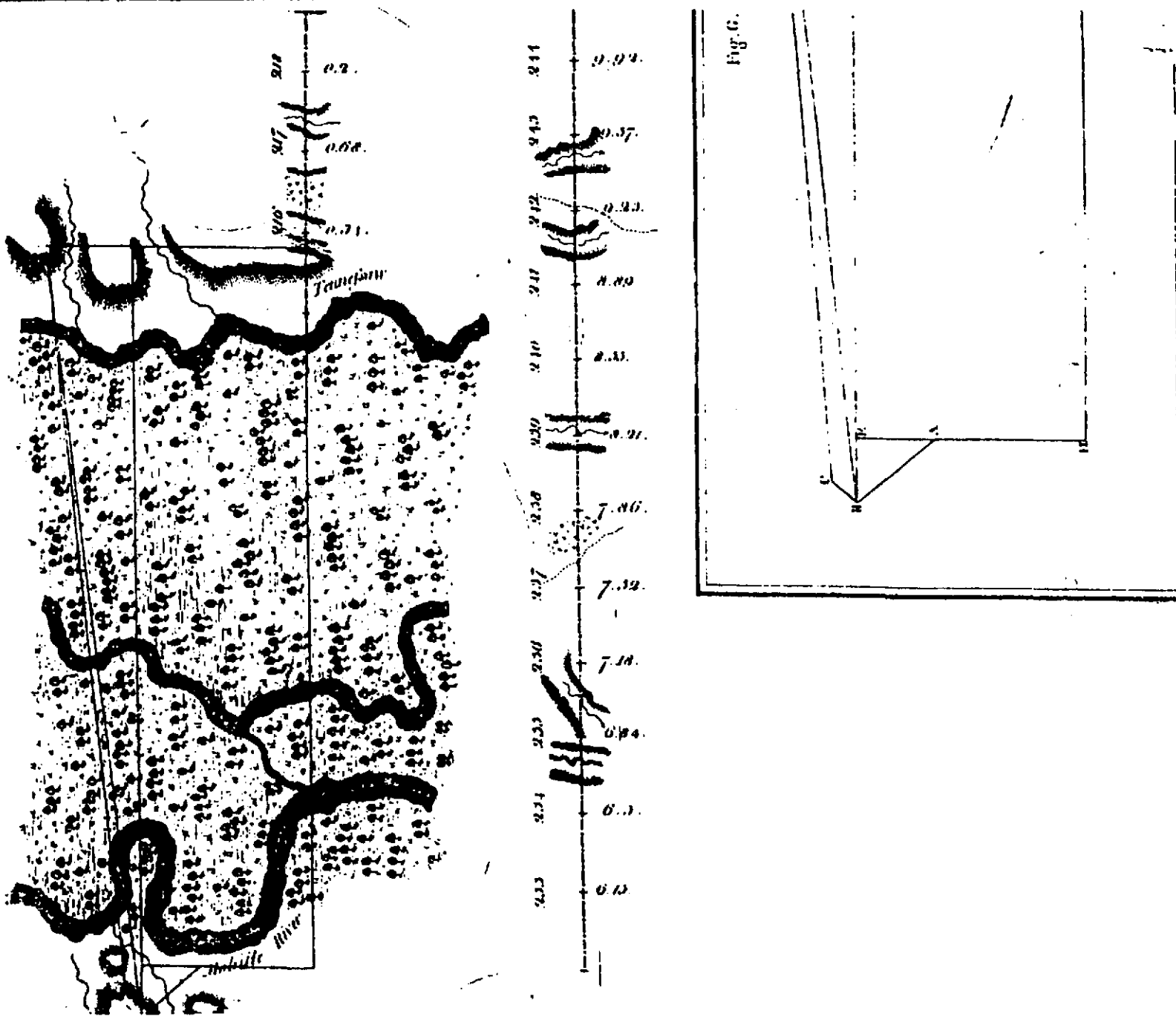
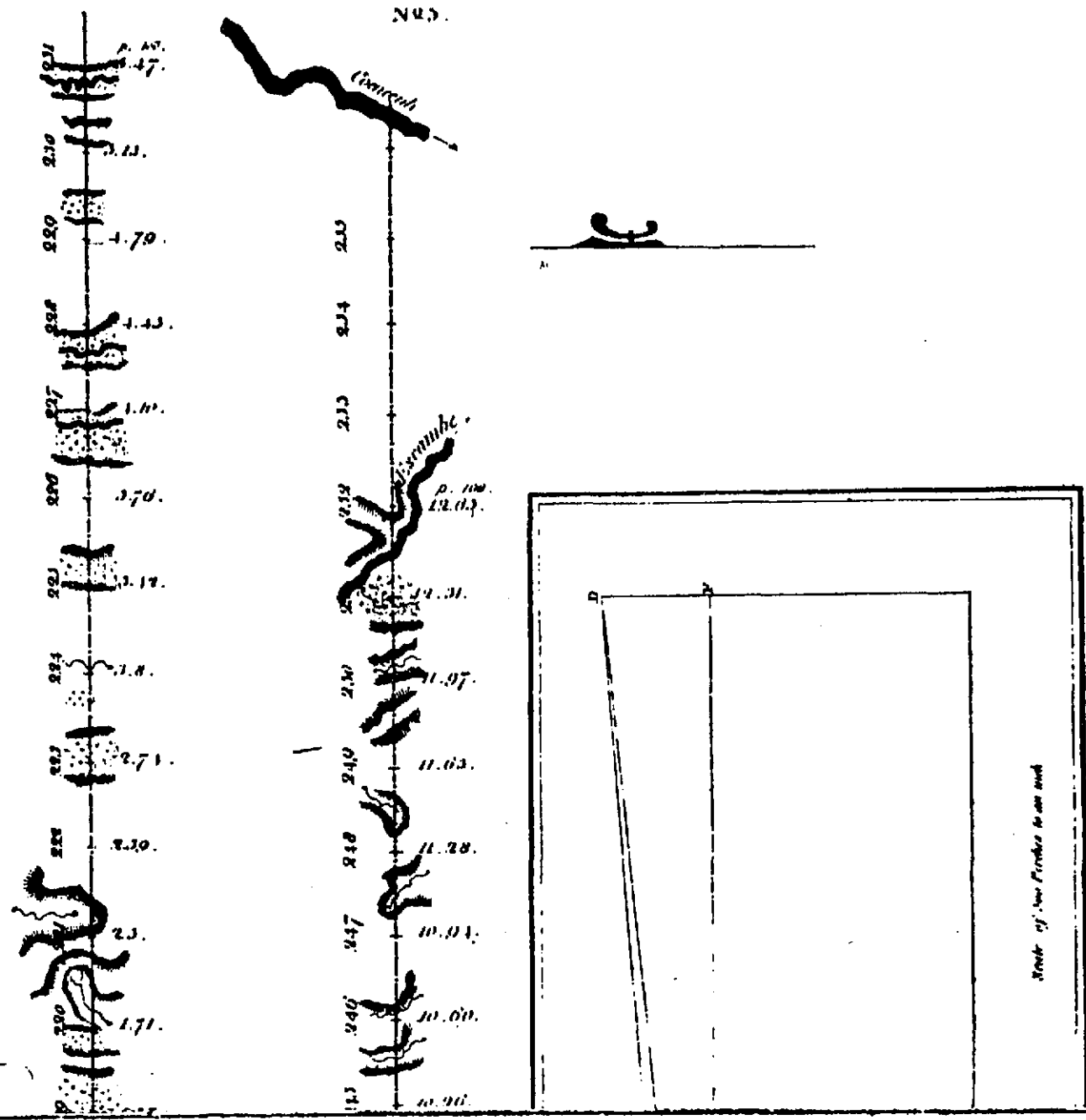
MAJOR ANDREW ELLICOTT AT THE AGE OF 45.
FROM A MINIATURE PAINTED IN NEW ORLEANS IN 1799, NOW OWNED
BY HIS GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER, MRS. CHARLES
B. CURTIS, OF NEW YORK.







Note. The effects between the guide line and parallel of latitude were too small to be laid down on this part of the boundary.



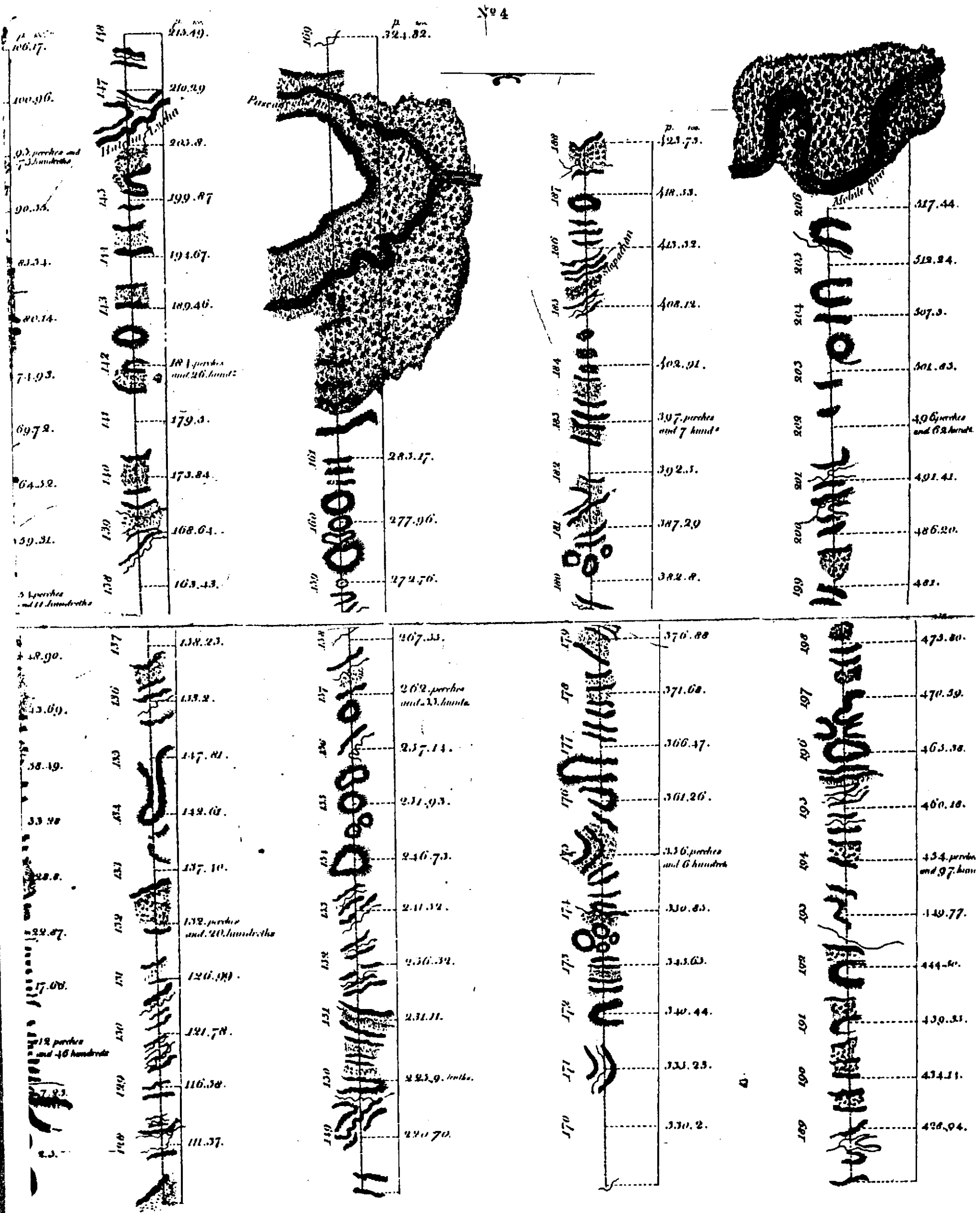


PLATE #8

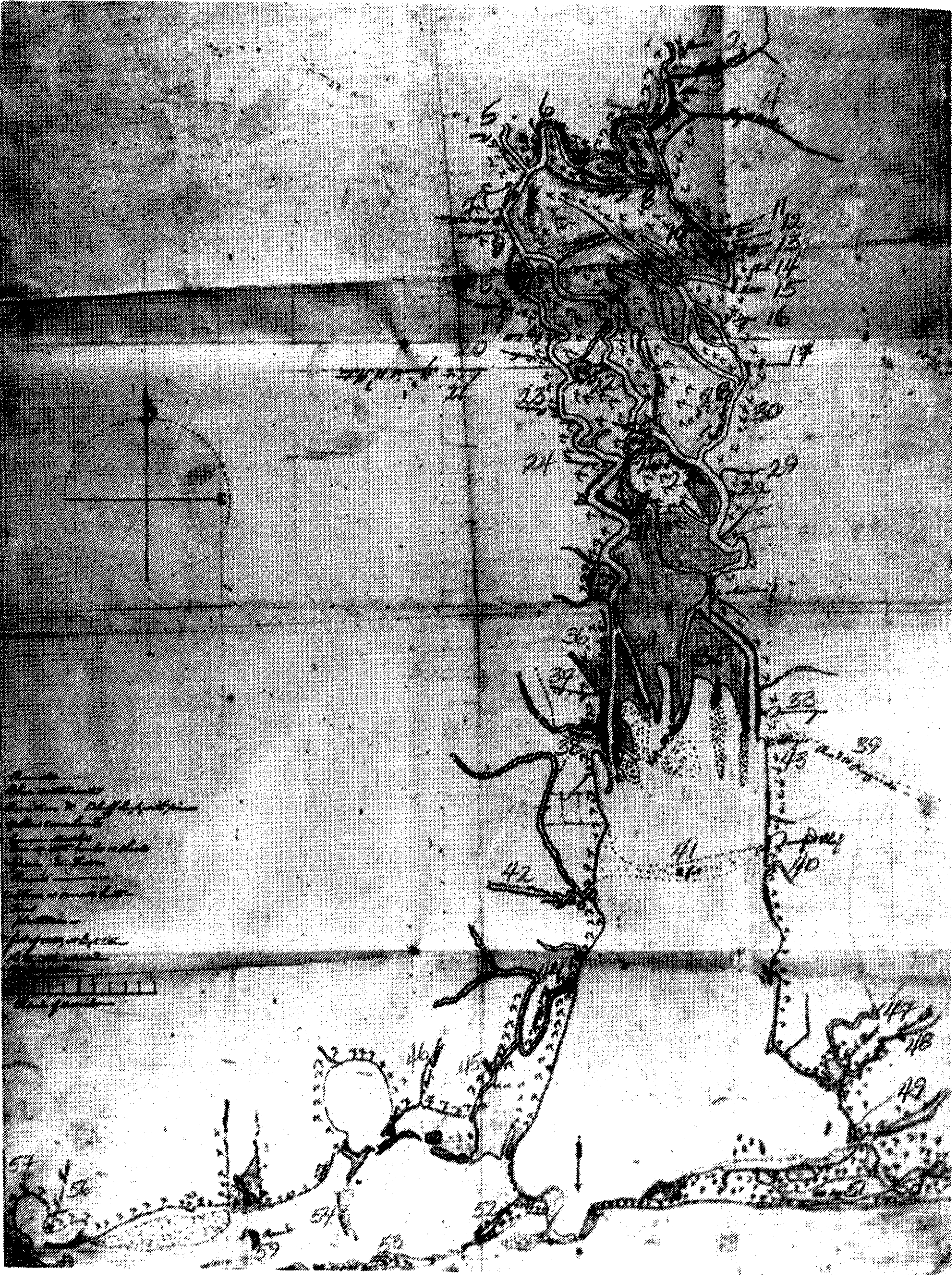


PLATE #9

THE FORT OF THE CONFEDERATION: THE SPANISH ON THE UPPER TOMBIGBEE

by

James P. Pate

In the late eighteenth century while Spanish and American diplomats harangued over a possible boundary in the Gulf country, a crudely fashioned frontier post was erected on the white bluffs of the Tombigbee River on the site of the old French Fort Tombecbe. In territory claimed by the young Republic, the Bourbon flag proudly flew in defiance of such claims. This small wooden, dirt, and chalk outpost on the northeastern fringe of a great Spanish Empire became a part of a defensive system designed to protect the Spanish provinces of Louisiana and West Florida. It became the unofficial capital of an Indian buffer state fashioned by Spanish officials to halt the expansion of land hungry American frontiersmen. The fact that it was erected despite conflicting territorial claims and extremely adverse conditions seems to provide further evidence to counteract the accepted view of Spanish bumbling and decadence. Yet this Spanish post, Fort Confederation, has generally been ignored or relegated to a footnote by most historians.¹

The strategic significance of the Upper Tombigbee River Valley in providing adequate defense for the provinces of Louisiana and West Florida was quickly noted by their new

¹See Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Spanish-American Frontier: 1783-1795; The Westward Movement and the Spanish Retreat in the Mississippi Valley* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1962, Reprint); Samuel F. Bemis, *Pinckney's Treaty: America's Advantage from Europe's Distress, 1783-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

governor and intendant general, Francisco Luis Hector, Baron de Carondelet, who arrived in New Orleans December 30, 1791, with a reputation as an excellent administrator, and despite his detractors, his tenure at New Orleans was quite successful given the conditions and problems of his provinces. Like provincial governors before him, Carondelet faced a myriad of commercial, financial, and military problems. However, it was obvious that the weak defensive posture of his provinces was to be his most difficult task. The Mississippi River afforded an "invasion" route for American free-booters, French Jacobins, or the British from Canada. In addition, the rapid expansion of Americans into the Southwest Territory presented the threat of an American seizure of the Muscle Shoals region of the lower Tennessee River and the Chickasaw Bluffs on the Mississippi. American control of the Chickasaw Bluffs would endanger Spanish control over the navigation of the Mississippi. Americans upon the Muscle Shoals would be within short distance of the Upper Tombigbee and the route to Mobile. To counter these threats, Carondelet launched a three point program to provide adequate defense for his provinces by expanding the Mississippi River fleet, by organizing a Southern Indian Alliance, and by constructing several new posts in the lower Mississippi River Valley.²

Carondelet saw the Southern Indians as the cornerstone for the establishment of a viable defensive posture. He immediately set out to bring the Creeks, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Cherokees into a defensive alliance with Spain. These four Indian nations were to become a buffer between the aggressive frontiersmen of the young Republic and his provinces. To attract the Creeks to the Bourbon flag, he appointed Pedro

²Jack D. L. Holmes, "Some Economic Problems of Spanish Governors in Louisiana," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XLII (November, 1962), pp. 535-536; Carondelet's Military Report, New Orleans, 1794, in Despatches of the Spanish Governors, 11 vols., Typescript MSS in Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, XI, pp. 290-300 (hereinafter Despatches); Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, August 3, 1793, *ibid.*, IX, p. 3; Pickering to Washington, Philadelphia, July 3, 1797, *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive* (38 vols., Washington, D. C.: Gales & Seaton, 1832-1861), *Foreign Relations*, 6 vols., II, pp. 66-67 (hereinafter *ASP*); Jefferson to Washington, Philadelphia, March 18, 1792, *ibid.*, I, pp. 252-257; see Jack D.L. Holmes, "The Ebb-Tide of Spanish Military Power on the Mississippi: Fort Fernando De Las Barrancas, 1795-1798," East Tennessee Historical Society's *Publications*, XXXVI (1964) pp. 23-44, and Abraham P. Nasatir, *Spanish War Vessels on the Mississippi, 1792-1796* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

Olivier as commissary with directions to dissuade them from attending American conferences and treaties, and to encourage their allegiance to Spain. He offered to John McDonald, a former British Indian agent, who was living among the Cherokees, the position of Spanish emissary to the Cherokee towns. Juan de la Villebeuvre and Benjamin Fooy received commissions to establish His Catholic Majesty as the protector of the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations. In an effort to aid their activities, he entered into an agreement with the British trading firm of Panton, Leslie, and Company for supplying trade goods to the Southern Indians. By 1792 Carondelet's efforts were being rewarded by visits of Southern Indian delegations to New Orleans who gave their assurances of their fealty to His Catholic Majesty. The Cherokee chief, Bloody Fellow, on a visit in 1792 urged the Spanish officials to establish posts at Muscle Shoals and on the site of the old French Fort Tombecbe.³

Within a year Villebeuvre had set Carondelet's plans in motion by negotiating the Treaty of Boucfouca. Juan Louis Fidele Farault de la Villebeuvre a native of Brittany had entered the Spanish army as a sub lieutenant in 1767, and when appointed as commissary to the Choctaw, he had reached the rank of captain of grenadiers in the Louisiana Regiment. Villebeuvre quickly proved to be one of the most capable Indian agents in the Spanish service. On May 10, 1793, an assembly of twenty-six large and small medal chiefs of the Small Party Choctaws signed the Treaty of Boucfouca. Villebeuvre, the interpreters, Simon Favre and Thomas Price, and two other Spaniards signed the treaty for His Catholic Majesty. By the treaty the Choctaws agreed to cede thirty square arpents of land (approximately twenty-five and a half acres) at the site of the old French Fort Tombecbe for the construction of a Spanish fort. In addition, the Choctaw-Spanish alliance was reaffirmed, and Villebeuvre promised the establishment of a trading post which would supply the Choctaws with trade goods.

³Olivier to Carondelet, Little Tallahassee, May 29, 1792, in Despatches, VIII, p. 61; Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, November 20 and November 28, 1792, *ibid.*, pp. 257-258, 261-263; Carondelet to Chiefs, Warriors and others of the Cherokee Nation, New Orleans, November 24, 1792, *ibid.*, p. 362; McDonald to Carondelet, October 6, 1792, and April 5, 1793, *ibid.*, pp. 251, 386; Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, October 1, 1793, *ibid.*, IX, p. 74; Panton, Leslie and Company to Carondelet, (1793), *ibid.*, XI pp. 22-25.

Villebeuvre's bluff site overlooking the Tombigbee River was not only linked southward to Mobile, but it would also afford the Spanish a middle position in arbitrating squabbles between the Chickasaws, Creeks, and Choctaws. A post at this site would give the Spanish a chance to undermine the strong American party among the Chickasaws who were closely tied to the Americans at Nashville and the proposed settlement in the Muscle Shoals area.⁴

Carondelet was ecstatic about the treaty and the construction of a new post. In a letter to Luis de Las Casas, captain general of Cuba, Carondelet praised the strategic importance of the white bluffs on which the new post was to be constructed. He saw it providing security to a vast territory drained by the Tombigbee, Mobile, Yazoo and Mississippi rivers. Moreover, the treaty and post were to further the Choctaw-Spanish alliance. His new fort would not only challenge the Americans, but it would also serve to strengthen Spanish claims to the Upper Gulf region. Before closing this glowing report, Carondelet proposed that Villebeuvre be rewarded by being brevetted lieutenant-colonel with the appropriate increase in salary and that Simon Favre, the interpreter, receive a salary increase of fifteen pesos monthly to raise his salary to sixty pesos.⁵

Despite the obvious seriousness of the frontier diplomacy conducted by Villebeuvre, he seems to have retained as much humor as objectivity. In writing of his difficulties, he reported, "you know the Choctaws . . . they are capable of going 100 leagues merely to get something to eat. We are not their masters; they do whatever they like, always saying yes; and although they always agree to what I tell them [they] always do as they please."⁶

⁴Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Boukfoûka, April 18, 1793, in "Papers From the Spanish Archives Relating to Tennessee and the Old Southwest," edited and translated by D. C. Corbitt and Roberta Corbitt, East Tennessee Historical Society's *Publications*, XXXII (1960), p. 75 (hereinafter Corbitt, "Papers"); Villebeuvre to Gayoso, Boukfouka, May 12, 1793, *ibid.*, pp. 81-82; Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, June 11, 1793, in Despatches, VII, pp. 404-405; Jack D.L. Holmes, "Spanish Treaties With West Florida Indians, 1784-1802," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLVIII (October, 1969), p. 152.

⁵Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, June 11, 1793, in Despatches, VIII, pp. 404-405.

⁶Villebeuvre to Gayoso, Boukfouka, May 25, 1793, in Corbitt, "Papers," XXXII, p. 92.

Carondelet's Indian agents and Manuel Luis Gayoso de Lemos, governor of the Natchez district, achieved the Indian alliance Carondelet sought at a remarkable Indian congress held at Fort Nogales (site of Vicksburg, Mississippi) in the fall of 1793. Gayoso, Villebeuvre, Favre, and Fooy negotiated the Treaty of Nogales which provided that the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Cherokees would "form an offensive and defensive alliance" under the protection of His Catholic Majesty. Each nation recognized the sovereignty of Spain in the Gulf and accepted Spain's pledge to protect them and preserve their lands. The treaty contained nineteen articles enumerating various pledges of friendship. It was formally signed on October 28, 1793, by five great medal chiefs representing the new Indian alliance, by Gayoso, and by eight witnesses, including Villebeuvre.⁷

The new confederacy of Southern Indians and His Catholic Majesty was quickly promoted by the construction of a military post on the old French Fort Tombecbe site which was called Fort Confederation in honor of the Nogales treaty. The construction of the post on the Upper Tombigbee was not accomplished without some difficulties. In fact, the first construction crew numbering several Negroes returned to Mobile before reaching the site when they encountered a group of drunken Indians. Undoubtedly their flight was aided by having heard all sorts of tales about the "savages" up river. However, by early May, seventeen Negroes had cut the timbers for the fort, and the site was being cleared for construction. The work crews were exposed to unusual heat according to Villebeuvre who wrote Carondelet that April, May, and June had passed without rain. Villebeuvre's efforts at the construction were hampered by an attack of jaundice. Added to the unusually dry, hot weather was a tempermental construction boss, Lieutenant Antonio Palao. It seems no one escaped Palao's wrath and at least one, the carpenter, Antonio Espejo, fled to Mobile where he later instituted legal action against

⁷Gayoso to Carondelet, Nogales, July 25, 1793, in Despatches, IX, pp. 10-13; Gayoso to Carondelet, Natchez, May 31, 1793, *ibid.*, XXXIII, p. 63; Treaty of Nogales, October 28, 1793, in Lawrence Kinnaid (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, 3 parts, Vols., II, III, and IV, *Annual Report*, American Historical Association, 1945 (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946-1949), Pt. III, pp. 223-227; McDonald to Carondelet, Cherokees, April 20, 1794, *ibid.*, p. 268.

Palao. Perhaps the rains that descended on the little outpost in early July cooled off the irate Catalanian; at least they brought a respite from the oppressive heat. The July rains found the fort nearly completed except for roofs.⁸

Palao constructed a stockade on each side of the fort. On the river side, to the east, he placed three parapets with a swivel gun on each. By September he had constructed a stockade wall on the bluff's edge with a third bastion with a larger cannon placed on an esplanade four and one-half feet high. The stockade walls were built of cedar posts six inches square, seven to seven and one-half feet "above ground-level." The banquette was eighteen inches high and two and one-half feet wide "with a three inch base." The banquette were to be constructed of brick or limestone, and the rampart was constructed of limestone and earth. A moat of some size was created on the west and north in completing the rampart.⁹

There were two gates, one opening to the north and one opening to the river landing on the southeast. Supplies were apparently hauled up a very steep incline from the river through the latter gate. The north gate was the main gate and it was a double gateway. The arms of Spain were centered within the space above the archway with the legend, "Carlos IV reigning, Baron de Carondelet governing. In the year 1794."¹⁰

By early August, a number of buildings and other structures were being completed within the walls of the fort. The first floor of the blockhouse had been completed, and the "troop kitchen" had been framed and was ready to roof. The powder magazine of cement and mortar joining "stones," with an arched roof, was evidently finished. The officers' quarters, the commandant's quarters, and the commandant's kitchen were in various stages of completion. A chimney and "rock wall" had been added to the oven to prevent the storeroom

⁸Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, April 21, May 7, June 9, July 7, 1794, *ibid.*, pp. 269-270, 281-282, 315-317, 328; Villebeuvre to Gayoso, Boukfouca, May 8, 1794, *ibid.*, p. 284; Jack D. L. Holmes, "Spanish Military Commander in Colonial Alabama," *Journal of Alabama Academy of Science*, XXXVII (January, 1966), pp. 64-65.

⁹AGI, Maps and Plans, numbers 161, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, and 169.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

from catching on fire. A "stone" staircase with its hand-rail led down to the river on the northeast corner. A flag pole standing fifty-eight feet high was in place near the bastion on the southwest corner. Wooden out-houses were constructed on a small clearing near the river. The soldiers' barracks had been laid-out, but it was not completed and perhaps not even under construction.¹¹

The blockhouse, located on the west side between the two bastions, was typical of the wooden frontier forts constructed by Spain throughout the Mississippi Valley. Similar structures were built at Campo de Esperanza (at Hopefield, Arkansas, opposite Memphis, Tennessee) in 1797 and at Concordia (Vidalia, Louisiana, opposite Natchez, Mississippi) in 1800. The Fort Confederation blockhouse was intended for protection against a possible Indian attack but they were not considered adequate defense against a superior force, supported by artillery. The first floor was completed by June 25, 1794 and was used to station pickets by the sergeant-major. The second floor was probably completed by late August and was designed to hold four cannon with lines of fire to provide proper defense of the fort if attacked.¹²

The fort as constructed by Palao was not a startling example of military architecture. In fact, according to Villebeuvre, Palao erred in constructing the blockhouse, and his error was not discovered until after the cannon were mounted on the second floor of the two story blockhouse, when it became obvious that the line of fire was very poor. The buildings within the stockade were closely crowded and Villebeuvre complained as early as July 7, 1794, that the fort was too small. Moreover, Villebeuvre reported the oven (without a chimney) touched the storehouse and that sparks might easily set off a fire. This was evidently corrected by August with the construction of a chimney and wall of "stone." Space was so limited that he worried whether he might lodge the armorer within the fort as he had planned to lodge the surgeon. Already a shed for Indian visitors had been erected outside the gate, and the interpreter had requested an apartment at one end of it. By November, Carondelet was proposing to shore

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

up the front of the post with dirt and that a rampart of stone and mortar be added. Carondelet also proposed that the native limestone be used as a building material.¹³

Whatever Fort Confederation lacked as a military post, it made up for by becoming a symbol of Spain's commitment to the Southern Indians. Even as trenches were being dug and as the stockade walls rose along the white bluffs of the Tombigbee, all manner of Southern Indians flocked to the new post. The Choctaws were especially pleased by the prospects of receiving their annual presents at the post rather than make the long trip to Mobile. Crop failures and food shortages found them present at the unfinished fort in growing numbers by June where they received corn and rice from Villebeuvre. The Choctaws faced real starvation after the loss of their second crop in two years. The dry spell had also prevented barges loaded with rice and corn from reaching Confederation, and Villebeuvre was forced to send pirogues down river to transfer the supplies to Confederation. Villebeuvre opened his own table to the Indians and used his own funds to help alleviate the crises. As Villebeuvre began to meet the Choctaw demands for food, they then started to press him for additional presents. Despite the obvious problems of navigating the Tombigbee, the lapses in filling requests for supplies in Mobile, and the instability of rum-filled Indians, Villebeuvre and Fort Confederation won the confidence of the Southern Indians and became a viable part of Carondelet's efforts to protect Spanish interests in the Gulf country.¹⁴

¹³Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, July 7, 1794, in Kinnaird (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Pt. III, pp. 315-317; Carondelet's Military Report, New Orleans, 1794, in Despatches, XI, pp. 299-304; Jack D. L. Holmes, "French and Spanish Cartography of Alabama: Maps, Plans and Charts of Colonial Alabama in French and Spanish Archives," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXVII (Spring and Summer, 1965), pp. 20-21; Palao to Carondelet, Confederation, June 24 and June 25, 1794, Archivo General de Indias, Papeles Procedentes de las Isla de Cuba, Jack D. L. Holmes — Microfilm Research Project, Copy in University of Southern Mississippi Library, Hattiesburg, legajo 29. (Hereinafter A.G.I., P.C.).

¹⁴Gayoso to Villebeuvre, Natchez, May 22, 1794, in Corbitt, "Papers," XXXIX (1967), pp. 98-100; Carondelet to Villebeuvre, New Orleans, June 4, 1794, *ibid.*, p. 101; Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, April 21, May 7, June 9, July 7, July 22, September 14, October 27, and December 23, 1794, in Kinnaird (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Pt. III, pp. 270, 280-281, 298-299, 315-317, 327, 340-341, 367, 382-384.

The new Spanish post was not only attracting large Indian delegations, but a sizeable group of Europeans also made the post the center of their activities. In addition to Villebeuvre, there were several officers, traders, interpreters, Negro slaves, and some forty garrison troops. One early visitor to the post was Major Gilberto Guillemard an engineer who is best remembered for designing the Cabildo and the Presbytere in New Orleans. Guillemard was evidently on an inspection tour for he reported to Carondelet that it would take six months to complete Confederation. At least one trader-interpreter, Simon Favre might be given some credit for bringing the cattle industry to west Alabama. Favre settled at the Tombecbe site during the winter of 1793-1794 and seems to have prospered to the point of establishing a small herd of cattle. Favre also operated a small trading post near the fort. Favre was joined by many others such as Turner Brashears, Thomas Price, and John Joyce, who served as interpreters and also engaged in trading activities.¹⁵ Post life for the average soldier or even the officers does not seem to have been very pleasant. The post commandant Palao remained at Confederation until December, 1794, when he was relieved of command by his own petition to Carondelet who transferred him to the command of San Esteban. Palao had written Carondelet that his family was suffering and asked that he be transferred to "a small corner where he could plant corn to fill the bellies of his children."¹⁶

At least one Spanish officer, Juan Antonio Bassot, arrived at and left Confederation under more unusual circumstances than Palao. Bassot was something of an eccentric who was called "a crazy degenerate" by Carondelet. Because of differences with Captain Manuel de Lanzos, the commandant at

¹⁵Carondelet to Villebeuvre, New Orleans, June 14, 1794, in Corbitt, "Papers," XL (1968), p. 103; Favre to Lanzos, Tombecbe, January 20, 1794, in Kinnaird (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Pt. III, pp. 249-250; Carondelet to Villebeuvre, New Orleans, April 23, 1794, *ibid.*, p. 271; Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, July 7, 1794, *ibid.*, pp. 316-317; Jack D. L. Holmes, *Gayoso: The Life of a Spanish Governor in the Mississippi Valley, 1789-1799* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 154; Jack D. L. Holmes, "Some French Engineers in Spanish Louisiana," in John Francis McDermott (ed.), *The French in the Mississippi Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), pp. 124-128.

¹⁶Holmes, "Spanish Military Commanders," pp. 62-65; Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, July 7, 1794, in Kinnaird (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Pt. III, p. 315.

Mobile, he had been relieved of his command at San Esteban and given orders to report to Pensacola. Instead of traveling east to Pensacola, he moved up the Tombigbee River to Fort Confederation. The touring officer was escorted out of the Choctaw country to Fort Nogales. Bassot's tour of the Tombigbee and Confederation area caused his superiors, Gayoso and Carondelet, all manner of discomfort. Despite pleas to remove him from service, the Tombigbee visitor would remain in the army until 1798, when he was discharged on a pension of fifteen dollars a month.¹⁷

A visit by an eccentric such as Bassot must have been something of a welcome release from the usual problems faced by Villebeuvre and his frontier community. His correspondence with Carondelet, Gayoso, and Lanzas reveals that he was continually harrassed by frictions between Spain's Indian allies. If small bands of Choctaws, Creeks, or Chickasaws were not at odds with one another, they were at Confederation demanding better goods or stealing the horses and cattle of the traders. Even Villebeuvre's horse was stolen, presenting the prospect of His Catholic Majesty's commissary to the Choctaws having to walk to the nation on his annual tour. There never seemed to be enough food, Limburg cloth, ammunition, blankets, rum, or trinkets to please the continual parade of Indian visitors to Confederation. On one occasion, two Chickasaws, Mingo-pouscouche and Nanhoulimastabe, asked for Spanish flags to fly over their towns since they had used their old flags to cover the bodies of their dead wives. Mingopouscouche also requested a saddle for his horse and a red uniform which Villebeuvre did not possess or promise. When not occupied at ministering to Spain's red allies, Villebeuvre sought medicines for the post, candles for the officers, and capes for the sentries. After less than nine months of the above, Villebeuvre was forgetting to number, date, or even sign his correspondence to Carondelet.¹⁸

¹⁷Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, January 26, 1795, in Despatches, V, p. 104; Holmes, "Spanish Military Commanders," p. 66.

¹⁸Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, May 7, July 7, July 22, September 14, October 27, and December 23, 1794, in Kinnaid (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Pt. III, pp. 280-281, 317, 327, 340-341, 367-368, 382-384; Villebeuvre to Gayoso, Boukfouca, May 8, 1794, *ibid.*, pp. 284-285; Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, February 3 and March 30, 1795, in Despatches, XI, pp. 313, 310; Carondelet to Villebeuvre, New Orleans, June 14, 1794, in Corbitt, "Papers," XL, p. 103.

Villebeuvre's problems were further complicated by the outbreak of hostilities between the Chickasaws and Creeks early in the new year 1795. The war was much more than the renewal of hostilities between two old enemies. Villebeuvre and Carondelet quickly saw the conflict as a much deeper and more threatening affair. The Chickasaws led by Piomingo, who was very closely linked to traders and land speculators in Nashville, had precipitated the violence by attacking a Creek hunting party. As hostilities raged, a group of Americans moved down from Nashville and started the construction of a post at the Muscle Shoals. The Indian war was a threat to Carondelet's Indian confederacy. The American post at Muscle Shoals could threaten Fort Confederation and further erode the Spanish influence within the Chickasaw Nation. Moreover, the Americans at Muscle Shoals were only a three day's march overland from the Chickasaw Bluffs on the eastern bank of the Mississippi where an American post could threaten Spanish navigation and defense of upper Louisiana.¹⁹

The American efforts had not been totally unexpected and in fact, Carondelet probably precipitated them by his own plans to establish a post on the bluffs near the mouth of Wolf River. The Treaty of Nogales in 1793 had found the Chickasaw representatives imploring the Spanish in article nine to deliver their annual presents in the nation "on the bank of the Mississippi." Benjamin Fooy was directed to reduce the influence of Piomingo by giving complete aid and support to Ugulayacabe who was pro-Spanish and a signer of the Nogales treaty. Governor Gayoso de Lemos of Natchez further instructed Fooy to gain Ugulayacabe's consent to raise a force of six hundred Chickasaws that could be used to defend the Natchez district and to a cession on the Chickasaw Bluffs for a Spanish post where their annual presents could be distributed. Fooy's efforts were greatly aided by Villebeuvre's activities at Fort Confederation where he continually cultivated the friendship of the Chickasaws. Carondelet wasted little effort in establishing a Spanish post on the bluffs by dispatching Gayoso himself to consummate the establishment of the post. On May 30, 1795, the Bourbon banner of Spain was raised above the hastily con-

¹⁹Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, March 30, 1795, and (May, 1795), in Despatches, XI, pp. 310-311, 313-314.

structed Fort San Fernando de las Barrancas.²⁰

Now Carondelet had two outposts deep in territory claimed by the United States. San Fernando de las Barrancas and Confederation carried out dual roles as military posts and as frontier ministries from which Spanish agents attempted to maintain the tenuous Indian buffer. The posts were symbols of the Spanish commitment but more importantly, they showed the Indians that the Spanish "talks" were honest. Unlike the Americans, the building of Spanish posts did not bring in a horde of land seekers. Even the Choctaws recognized that a Spanish fort was of little threat when compared to the American frontiersmen who constantly wanted more dirt from the Indians. The American expansion to the Muscle Shoals brought a Choctaw delegation to Confederation begging Villebeuvre not to leave the post and let the Americans take over.²¹

For over three years Carondelet had worked diligently to halt American expansion and hold the Gulf country for His Catholic Majesty. In March, 1795, he proposed to strengthen San Esteban on the lower Tombigbee so that communication between Confederation and Mobile could be maintained. He ordered four long cannons with carriages, balls, and tools so that Confederation would be defended by six pieces and San Esteban by four. Yet even as he laid plans to refurbish San Esteban and strengthen Confederation, the Creek-Chickasaw War was threatening to destroy the Indian confederacy which was so vital to the defense of Louisiana and West Florida. His wooden and dirt posts seemed doomed to be overrun by land hungry frontiersmen, the American army, or by

²⁰Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, (May, 1795), *ibid.*, XI, p. 314; Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, September 14, 1794, in Kinnaird (ed.), *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Pt. III, pp. 340-341; "Dairy of Gayoso de Lemos' Expedition on *La Vigilante*," in Nasatir, *Spanish War Vessels*, pp. 253-278. See Jack D. L. Holmes, "Spanish American Rivalry Over the Chickasaw Bluffs, 1780-1795," *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications*, XXXIV (1962), pp. 26-57, and "The Ebb-Tide of Spanish Military Power on the Mississippi: Fort San Fernando de las Barrancas," *ibid.*, XXXVI (1964), pp. 23-44. Gayoso's presence was noted in the March 2, 1796, issue of the *Knoxville Gazette* by the "Extract of a letter from Kentucky to a gentleman in this city (Richmond)," November 4, 1795.

²¹Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, March 30, 1795, in *Despatches*, XI, pp. 310-312.

an army of free-booters recruited by French Jacobins.²²

While Carondelet concerned himself with defending the Spanish Gulf claims against a growing number of claimants, Villebeuvre continued his effective ministrations at Fort Confederation with the Southern Indians. On November 26, 1795, he completed a census of the Choctaws which numbered 15 great medal chiefs, 30 small medal chiefs, 74 captains and important sub-chiefs, 2,198 warriors, 2,360 women, and 3,193 children (total of 7,870). When not occupied with his census work, Villebeuvre continued to receive Indian delegations who confessed loyalty to Spain and asked for presents or food, often in the same breath. The food supply at Confederation demanded his constant attention because of the time, distance, and problems always encountered in trying to replenish the supply from Mobile. In addition, his correspondence with Carondelet, Gayoso, and other Spanish officials demanded much of his time. Everyday seemed to demand a count of the medicine, rice, corn, trinkets, capes, or some other articles that he was responsible for ordering and dispensing. When a question was raised about his effectiveness, he quickly offered to resign in the spring of 1796. The Frenchman had suffered enough for His Catholic Majesty, but Carondelet reassured him of his usefulness and asked him to remain at Fort Confederation.²³

Even as Villebeuvre talked of resigning his position at Confederation, Carondelet was proposing a rather drastic plan to Luis de las Casas, captain general of Cuba, who was his immediate superior and his brother-in-law. Carondelet proposed calling a congress of the Southern Indians, either at Confederation or at Nogales. All the principal chiefs would be called together in order to arm their nations in the defense of Louisiana and West Florida. Until now, Carondelet had generally urged the Southern Indians to remain at peace with

²²*Ibid.*; Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, (May, 1795), *ibid.*, pp. 313-314; Carondelet to (Las Casas), March 30, 1795, *ibid.*, V, p. 158; Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, March 30, 1796, *ibid.*, XI, pp. 308-309; McDonald to Carondelet, Cherokees, December 31, 1795, *ibid.*, p. 253.

²³Choctaw Census of 1795, Fort Confederation, November 26, 1795, by Juan de la Villebeuvre and Simon Favre, in Jack D. L. Holmes, "The Choctaws in 1795," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XXX (Spring, 1968), pp. 34-46; Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, March 8, July 9, 1796, A.G.I., P.C. leg. 129.

the United States while resisting American demands for land cessions. Carondelet felt this drastic action necessary if the aggressive Americans were not to seize "the immense continent closed in by the Atlantic Ocean, the Ohio, the Mississippi, and the Gulf of Mexico." Carondelet meant to hold on to this territory even at the expenditure of 200,000 pesos to arm the Indians and an additional 100,000 pesos each year to continue this armed Indian buffer. He was certain that money and muskets could hold the eastern part of Louisiana and West Florida. Unless these steps were taken, Carondelet predicted that "before this century is past, Spain will infallibly lose the dominion of the Mississippi and the gulf coasts from the mouth of that river to the doors of Florida."²⁴

While Carondelet, Gayoso, and Villebeuvre labored to keep the Bourbon flag aloft over the Gulf country, their efforts were being obliterated by the Treaty of San Lorenzo. The Spanish Council of State concerned that the United States was about to declare war on Spain decided to negotiate a treaty settling the boundary dispute over the Gulf country. On October 27, 1795, the Spanish minister, Manuel de Godoy, and the American minister to Spain, Thomas Pinckney, made the appeasement effort permanent by signing a treaty which provided that Spain would cede all her claims to territory north of the thirty-first parallel and surrender control over the Mississippi River. The treaty came at time when the young Republic could ill afford an all out war, and at a time when Spanish defenses in Louisiana and West Florida were at their strongest.²⁵

Although news of the treaty reached the Gulf frontier by March, 1796, Carondelet did not receive Godoy's orders to execute the treaty until midsummer. Even then Carondelet hesitated and protested to Godoy that Spain had given up too much. Gayoso seemed to have suffered even greater shock and wrote even stronger protests that to execute the treaty would cause irreparable damage to Spain's border provinces. Despite the firm conviction that a great error had been made,

²⁴Carondelet to Las Casas, New Orleans, March 30, 1796, in *Despatches*, XI, pp. 308-309.

²⁵Treaty of San Lorenzo el Real, October 27, 1795, *ASP*, I, pp. 546-549; Holmes, *Gayoso*, pp. 174-176. See the correspondence of Pinckney, Godoy, and others relative to the treaty in *ASP*, I, pp. 533-546.

Carondelet began to formulate plans for the evacuation of the Spanish posts above the thirty-first parallel, San Fernando de las Barrancas, Nogales, Natchez, Confederation, and San Esteban. Carondelet knew the evacuation of San Fernando de las Barrancas and Confederation deep in the Indian country might be attended by some violence. The Chickasaws and Choctaws were sure to be very bitter and resentful. The chiefs who had agreed to their construction were pro-Spanish, and now they were to be taken over by the Americans. Hoping to prevent a clash of the garrisons and the Indians, Carondelet sent secret dispatches calling for the speedy evacuations of San Esteban, Confederation, Nogales, and San Fernando de las Barrancas. Natchez was to be evacuated after Gayoso had helped complete the surveying of the new international boundary.²⁶

Carondelet's secret orders to evacuate and destroy Fort Confederation reached Villebeuvre in late February, 1797. Even at a time of surrender and defeat, Villebeuvre was busy writing in defense of a contract he had made with Simon Favre for supplying fresh meat for the post. Fort Confederation was evacuated on March 17, 1797, and Villebeuvre led the Spanish retreat from the Upper Tombigbee down river to San Esteban. By the time the Confederation garrison reached San Esteban, Carondelet had received new directives from Godoy to hold up the evacuation of the posts above the thirty-first parallel. Those orders arrived too late to prevent the evacuation of San Fernando de las Barrancas and Confederation. For the next year, Carondelet and Gayoso delayed further withdrawal in the vain hope that the treaty might be revised to Spain's advantage.²⁷

²⁶Carondelet to Gayoso, New Orleans, February 11, 1797, in Mississippi Provincial Archives, Spanish Dominion (9 volumes of transcripts), Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, VI, pp. 324-327; Jack D. L. Holmes, "Notes on the Spanish Fort San Esteban De Tombecbe," *Alabama Review*, XVIII (October, 1965), p. 289; Holmes, *Gayoso*, pp. 176-180; Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803: A Study in Trade, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1962, Reprint), pp. 52-55, 280-284 (notes 6, 7, and 10); Holmes, "The Ebb-Tide of Spanish Military Power on the Mississippi," pp. 36-37; "Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Philadelphia to his friend in Hager's Town," January 25, 1796, in *Knoxville Gazette*, March 2, 1796.

²⁷Villebeuvre to Carondelet, Confederation, February 15, 1797, A.G.I., P.C. Leg. 129; Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question*, pp. 280-284 (notes 6, 7, 10 and 29); Holmes, "San Esteban de Tombecbe," pp. 285-289; Holmes, "Spanish Military Commanders," p. 61.

The Spanish had maintained Fort Confederation on the Upper Tombigbee less than three years. Carondelet's crudely fashioned frontier post became a victim of an international treaty. But Carondelet himself had maintained that it was responsible for holding back American seizure of the Gulf. Moreover, its surrender was arranged by a treaty consummated in Europe not in the Spanish Gulf. Its evacuation and the erosion of the Indian buffer fulfilled Carondelet's prediction of American control of the Mississippi to the Gulf by the new century. The Spanish retreat from the Upper Tombigbee heralded the end of Alabama's Spanish colonial period. However, the strategic significance of Fort Confederation was not obliterated as easily. The United States government established an Indian factory at or near the site in 1816, and the Indians once again gathered at the white bluffs to receive presents and talks.²⁸

²⁸This article was presented as a paper at the annual meeting of the Alabama Historical Association in Birmingham on April 28, 1972.

NEWSPAPERS AND NEWSPAPER MEN DURING TUSCALOOSA'S CAPITAL PERIOD, 1826-1846

by

Robert H. McKenzie

From 1826 to 1846 Tuscaloosa served as Alabama's fourth political capital, its second as a state.¹ As the hub of the state's political affairs, Tuscaloosa attracted both the controversies and the controversialists of the day. Political debate within the strong two party system prevailing by 1840 produced two (sometimes more) competing newspapers. These papers both attracted and produced men with a flair for writing and debate. Consequently, the newspapers and their progenitors provided a significant portion of the infrastructure for the molding of public opinion and the conduct of public affairs.

Tracing the overlapping histories of these papers and the men who managed them can be confusing. During the capital period, a dozen or so newspapers vied for attention and survival. A precise statement of numbers is difficult since some publishing ventures lasted only a few issues. Moreover, owners and editors changed frequently, often from one newspaper to another. Failures and mergers were also frequent. The dozen or so newspapers of the period are overlaid with the lives of more than thirty personalities, many of them associated

¹See William H. Brantley, *Three Capitals: A Book about the First Three Capitals of Alabama, St. Stephens, Huntsville, and Cahawba* (Boston: Merrymont Press, 1947), pp. 204-207.

with several different newspapers in the twenty-year period.²

To bring some order to this welter, we will first examine the common features of journalism during Tuscaloosa's capital period. Then we will examine the groupings that can be made of the newspapers in terms of chronology and political focus. Finally, we will look at some of the major personalities of Tuscaloosa's newspaper scene prior to 1846.

The newspapers that served Tuscaloosa prior to 1846 had several common characteristics. First, they all were of about the same appearance, although differing somewhat in size. Print was arranged in one-column wide sections; each page was from 6 to 8 columns wide. To give variety in appearance, editors commonly used two types of print on each page, but illustrations were few. An early printer might have three or four woodcuts — a house, a stage coach, a fugitive slave, or other simple device — that could be inserted in advertisements to provide a bare measure of animation in appearance. As time passed, the range of illustrations became more plentiful and elaborate. Four pages were common, with advertisements usually on the first and third pages. In the absence of latter-day wire services, editors relied greatly on copied material from other domestic and foreign newspapers. When mails were slow and political events sparse, editors were prone to argue with competitors to provide filler material. The primary focus was upon politics, at the expense of local news and literary materials. Editors often printed important political speeches, legislative acts, and judicial decisions verbatim. With rare exceptions, all newspapers were weeklies. Wednesdays, Fridays, or Saturdays were common days of issue. Sometimes, a session of the legislature or an attempt to drive off a competitor would produce two issues per week for a time,

²Basic references for the study of antebellum newspapers in Alabama are: Rhoda Coleman Ellison, *A Check List of Alabama Imprints, 1807-1870* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1946) and *Early Alabama Publications: A Study in Literary Interests* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1947) and W. W. Screws, "Alabama Journalism," *Memorial Record of Alabama* (2 vols.; Madison, Wisc.: Brant and Fuller, 1893), II, 158-235. For Tuscaloosa in particular, see Mary E. Hill, "A Study of the Leading Newspapers in Tuscaloosa, 1837-1865, and Their Political Importance," (M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1951) and Elizabeth L. Simms, "A Study of the *Flag of the Union*, A Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Newspaper, 1833-43: Its Importance and Influence," (M.A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1950).

but these experiments never became continuing practice.³

The rhythm of a basically rural economy drove the newspapers and the events they reported. The legislature met annually in the fall following harvest, beginning in November or December and extending into late December or January. Special sessions were called in 1832, 1837, and 1841. Even the University of Alabama, which opened for classes in Tuscaloosa in 1831, adapted to the pattern imposed on the town by nature and politics. During the capital period, commencement was held in December rather than in the summer. With minor modifications over the years, the University recessed from Christmas to early spring and again from late July to early fall.⁴

Political activity was constant. Elections of some sort were held every year: state legislative elections annually, congressional elections in even years, and presidential caucuses every leap year. This pace insured spirited newspaper comment. Editors focused on national political races, somewhat on state issues, and hardly ever on local elections.

All Tuscaloosa's newspapers struggled financially. All charged about the same: usually \$4 for a year's subscription in advance; \$5 a year otherwise. Advertising was sold by the column square of ten, twelve, or fifteen lines: usually \$1 for the first appearance and 50¢ for subsequent insertions. Editors frequently appealed to subscribers and advertisers to pay debts. Circulation figures are impossible to gauge with accuracy. The newspapers occasionally made unverifiable claims. The population of Tuscaloosa in 1826 was approximately 1,500. The census of 1840 recorded 3,046 persons. In 1846, the city's last year as capital, the population was about 4,500. By 1850 the population had fallen to 1,950.⁵ Even at its peak, this population was inadequate to support the

³Major repositories for Tuscaloosa's newspapers prior to 1846 are the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama, and the Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library, University of Alabama, University, Alabama. Files for each paper for some years are complete, for other years intermittent.

⁴James B. Sellers, *History of the University of Alabama* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1953), 139-41.

⁵*Compendium of the Sixth Census* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Allen, 1841), 52-54. Also see Matthew W. Clinton, *Tuscaloosa, Alabama: Its Early Days, 1816-1865* (Tuscaloosa: The Zonta Club, 1958), 65, 81.

number of newspapers that competed for its attention. State-wide appeal as a party organ at the capital, designation as state printer, and promotion of political controversy to attract readers were therefore important elements of the contest for survival.

The history of Tuscaloosa's newspapers prior to 1846 can be grouped into four chronological periods. The first of these was an initial period extending from 1819 (pre-capital) to 1829. By the latter year basic competitors had emerged. Only one newspaper had been established in the pre-capital years: the *Republican* (1819), later the *American Mirror* (1820-27), later the *Chronicle* (1827-29). The *Sentinel* competed with the *Chronicle* from 1827 to 1829, when both failed and were succeeded by the *Alabama State Intelligencer* and the *Spirit of the Age*.

The second period occurred between 1829 and 1834. The *Intelligencer* and the *Spirit* were first joined by two new competitors, then the total of four papers was reduced to two by a series of mergers. The first new competitor, the *Inquirer*, resulted from a split in the *Intelligencer's* management in 1831. The *State Rights and Free Trade Expositor* was established in 1832 and quickly merged with the *Spirit* to form the *Spirit of the Age and State Rights Expositor*. This paper in turn merged in 1834 with the *Intelligencer* (which also carried for a time *State Rights Expositor* on its banner). Meanwhile, the *Inquirer* failed, and its creditors formed a successor, the *Flag of the Union*.

The third period occurred from 1834 to 1842. During these eight years, the *Flag* grew in strength, while the *Intelligencer* waned. In 1837 a new paper was established, the *Independent Monitor*, which by 1840 supplanted the *Intelligencer* (The latter was known in its last days as the *Whig*). By 1840 Tuscaloosa's two newspapers were the *Flag* and the *Independent Monitor*.

During the final period (1842 to 1846) the *Flag* encountered financial difficulties and a Democratic competitor, the *Banner of Alabama* in 1842. The *Flag* weathered the brief competition, but then changed owners, names, and philosophies

to become the *Alabama State Journal and Flag* in 1843. The *Flag's* original aims were sustained briefly from late 1843 to late 1844 by the *Democratic Gazette*. The failure of the *Gazette* left the *Journal and Flag* and the *Independent Monitor* to compete until removal of the capital to Montgomery in 1846.

This brief chronological outline can be fleshed out by referring to the political philosophies of the newspapers during these years. Four guiding philosophies can be discerned. One was the vaguest, that of independent, shading toward one of the other three in any given case. The other positions were union Democrat, state-rights Democrat, and Whig.⁶

The earliest newspapers must be classified as independent. Party lines were not firmly drawn in the 1820s, and there was little politically to distinguish the *Chronicle* and the *Sentinel* between 1827 and 1829.

Succeeding papers could be more clearly defined politically, but their stances often shifted with events. The *Intelligencer* began as an union-oriented Democratic paper. Its original editor established a competitor, the *Inquirer*, which was even more strongly pro-union. The *Inquirer's* successor, the *Flag*, consistently maintained the tradition for union and the Democracy.

The *Intelligencer*, however, became more state-rights in its orientation in 1831-32 as the central question for Alabamians shifted from the less immediate issue of nullification in South Carolina to Federal delays in removing Indians from Alabama. The *Spirit of the Age* likewise became more state-rights oriented. Neither the *Intelligencer* nor the *Spirit of the Age* matched the brief life of the *State Rights and Free Trade Expositor* in adhering to nullification as advocated by John C. Calhoun. In 1834 when the *Expositor* merged with the *Intelligencer*, the Calhoun wing of the Democratic party no longer had a clear voice in Tuscaloosa, since the *Intelligencer's* state-rights fervor had waned.

⁶For an introduction to the political background, see the useful but somewhat outdated Theodore H. Jack, *Sectionalism and Party Politics in Alabama, 1819-1842* (Menasha, Wisc.: Banta Publishing Co., 1919).

The *Intelligencer* then drifted, through a succession of owners, toward the Whig position. By 1840 the *Independent Monitor* (in spite of the first word of its title) was challenging the *Intelligencer* for open leadership of the Whig following. The *Intelligencer's* belated attempt to establish a constituency by renaming itself the *Whig* was too late.

Meanwhile, the *Flag* had remained staunchly for the pro-union wing of the Democratic party. By 1842 the state-rights faction was again gaining strength, although Tuscaloosa had strong union sentiments in both the Democratic and Whig parties. The efforts of the Calhoun wing to establish a voice in Tuscaloosa led state-rights advocates to purchase the *Flag* and convert it as the *Journal and Flag*, into an organ for their position in 1843. The failure of the *Democratic Gazette*, quickly organized to replace the *Flag* as a union Democrat organ, symbolized changes taking place in the state as a whole. Underscoring the point is the fact that the *Flag* had won designation as state printer by the legislature every year of its existence until 1842, when the *Banner of Alabama* briefly held the honor. In January, 1844 the *Democratic Gazette* lost the contest for state printing to the new *Journal and Flag*. With the failure of the *Gazette* in December, 1844, Union men in Tuscaloosa had little recourse except to the Whig party and its voice, the *Independent Monitor*. The decline of the Whig party and the playing out of this scenario to secession is beyond the scope of this paper.

A third way of understanding the newspaper scene in Tuscaloosa during the capital period is to focus upon the newspapermen themselves. Of the thirty plus men who served as owners, publishers, and editors, a handful stand out for their personalities and for the ways their careers illuminate understanding of antebellum journalism in Alabama. Unfortunately, biographical material for most of these figures is limited. Furthermore, it seems possible that much "editing" and other writing was performed anonymously by various persons in Tuscaloosa.⁷

⁷Screws, "Alabama Journalism," *Memorial Record*, II, 174, for example, says that the noted University of Alabama professor, F. A. P. Barnard, once simultaneously "edited" two competing newspapers, producing a vehement "argument" between the two editors leading to the brink of a duel.

Thomas M. Davenport began Tuscaloosa's first newspaper, the *Republican*, in 1819. Davenport was an improvident printer, not an editor, and the driving force in his venture appeared to be his older daughter, Eliza. She and her sister did much of the press work. Eliza married a Scotchman named Dugald McFarlane, described by a contemporary as "strong-minded . . . with little education or information, and less energy or perseverance . . . sorely beset with the sin of intemperance."⁸ McFarlane became co-owner and editor of the paper, known by 1827 as the *Chronicle*. McFarlane secured designation as state printer for the first session of the legislature in Tuscaloosa, and Thomas M. Davenport was assigned to the legislature as reporter. The rival *Sentinel*, brought to Tuscaloosa in 1827 from Huntsville, by Thomas Grantland, hired young Washington Moody to report the legislature. Moody later became a prominent banker in the city. McFarlane soon angered the town with some editorial comments and moved to Mobile, ending the *Chronicle's* run in Tuscaloosa.⁹

Wesley and Hugh McGuire hastened the demise of the *Chronicle* and the *Sentinel* by founding Tuscaloosa's first sustained journalistic success, the *Alabama State Intelligencer* in 1829. The McGuires of Tuscaloosa and a third obscure partner, William E. Henry, secured the state printing contract for the legislative session of 1829. The McGuires had published a paper at Cahaba. After fulfilling the contract to print the *Acts and Journals* of the legislature, their firm began printing the *Intelligencer* in March, 1829. Their editor was Erasmus Walker, perhaps not uncoincidentally a member of the legislature from Dallas county from 1827 to 1829.

Walker bought out Hugh McGuire before the end of 1829 and a year later sold his interest to Thomas H. Wiley, an employee. Walker and Wiley soon disagreed heatedly over the

⁸William R. Smith, *Reminiscences of a Long Life; Historical, Political, Personal and Literary* (Washington, D.C.: William R. Smith, Sr., 1889), 24.

⁹The incident is discussed in bare detail by Ellison, *Early Alabama Publications*, 31, quoting the *Alabama State Intelligencer*, August 28, 1829. The known surviving issues of the *Chronicle* for (July 6 and 20 and August 10), 1829, do not contain McFarlane's offensive comments. The July 20 issue, however, contains the only hint of local controversy, a long letter to the editor opposing an attempt by the legislature "to force obedience to certain rules of the Society for the promotion of temperance." It may be that that McFarlane's indiscretion had something to do with this matter.

terms of Walker's continuing relationship with the *Intelligencer* until the state printing for 1830 had been completed. In December, 1830, Walker began his own paper, the *Inquirer*. Both papers became battle grounds for trading personal and political insults. In the early 1830s, Walker leaned toward the union Democrat position, while Wiley and Alexander M. Robinson (about whom more later), editor of the town's third paper, the *Spirit of the Age*, quarrelled over primary advocacy of the state-rights position. As mentioned, Alabama's quarrel with the Federal government over release of former Indian lands to white settlers encouraged state-rights sentiments. Advocacy of the state-rights position, however, soon became clearly identified in the Tuscaloosa press.

Richard T. Brumby was involved in the newspaper business for only a few years, but he introduced decisively the state-rights Democrat position to Tuscaloosa. A graduate of South Carolina College in 1824, and a lawyer in his native state for a number of years, Brumby moved to Alabama in 1831, first to Montgomery and then to Tuscaloosa. In November, 1832, he began publishing the *States Rights and Free Trade Expositor* to espouse John C. Calhoun's theory of nullification and to defend South Carolina's position in its controversy with President Andrew Jackson over enforcement of the tariff laws. In December he purchased the *Spirit of the Age* from Alexander M. Robinson an associate and began publishing the *Spirit of the Age and States Rights Expositor*. He published this paper until 1834 when he was offered the chair of chemistry, mineralogy, and geology in the University of Alabama. Brumby sold his paper to Alexander M. Robinson, and John G. Davenport of the *Intelligencer*. After leaving the *Spirit*, Robinson had succeeded Wiley at the *Intelligencer*. Brumby remained at the University for fifteen years until his appointment to the faculty of South Carolina College in 1849.¹⁰

Another editor who made his mark in fields other than

¹⁰Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography* (4 vols.; Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1921), III, 240. A fervent secessionist, Brumby sold most of his possessions and invested all in Confederate bonds. Age and ill health kept him from military service, but he sent all five of his sons (the youngest fifteen years old) into Confederate service. His extensive collection of rocks, minerals, shells, etc., is housed at Davidson University. On his newspaper career, see also Simms, "A Study of the *Flag of the Union*," 12-14, 28. On his career at the University, see Sellers, *A History of the University of Alabama*, passim.

journalism was Alabama's most noted antebellum literary figure, Alexander B. Meek. Meek became co-owner and editor of the *Flag of the Union* in 1835. The *Flag* was the successor to Walker's *Inquirer*, which failed. Unlike Brumby, Meek was a union Democrat, and he established the *Flag* in the tradition of dominance in Tuscaloosa it was to occupy until the early 1840s. Meek was only twenty-one when he became editor of the *Flag*, after graduating from the University of Alabama in 1833 and practicing law for a few years. Meek's ambitions for the *Flag* were high. In addition to promises to oppose "latitudinarian measures," such as nullification, Federal internal improvements, protective tariffs, and a national bank, Meek pledged to provide "an interesting and valuable companion to the lover of literature and general news."¹¹ Meek was not a fiery editor and reluctantly engaged in editorial disputes. Although politics remained the major focus of the paper, Meek did print literary articles from current magazines and poetry, including his own. In early 1836 Meek took temporary leave from the *Flag* to serve in the Seminole War in Florida. His letters to the *Flag* described the environs of Florida, rather than the fighting. Upon his return to Tuscaloosa, Meek began publishing the *Flag* twice a week. This effort at expansion was short-lived, less than a month. In late July, 1836, Meek sold his interest in the *Flag* to accept a gubernatorial appointment as state attorney-general. Meek remained in Tuscaloosa until 1845, practicing law, editing a literary magazine, the *Southron* (1839), and serving as probate judge (1845).¹²

¹¹*Flag of the Union*, July 11, 1835.

¹²Meek left Tuscaloosa to become assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury. In 1846 he moved to Mobile, where he lived until 1863. There he edited the *Mobile Daily Register*, served twice in the state legislature and once as probate judge, and published his major literary works. His most noted creation was a long poem about the 1813-14 Creek War entitled *The Red Eagle* (1855). Biographical sources are plentiful. See Owen, *Alabama Biography*, IV, 1183-84; Herman C. Nixon, *Alexander Beaufort Meek: Poet, Orator, Journalist, Statesman* (Auburn: Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1910), C. H. Ross, "Alexander Beaufort Meek," *Sewanee Review*, IV (August, 1896), 411-27; Margaret G. Figh, "Alexander Beaufort Meek: Pioneer Man of Letters," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, II (Summer, 1940), 127-51; and A. B. Moore, "Alexander Beaufort Meek," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), XII, 493. Smith's *Reminiscences*, 315-44, also contains material on Meek. For his newspaper career in particular, see Simms, "A Study of the *Flag of the Union*," 29-38. For his literary career, see Benjamin B. Williams, *A Literary History of Alabama: The Nineteenth Century* (Rutherford, N.J.: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1979), 39-57. Meek's surviving personal papers are in the Alabama Department of Ar-

The new owner of the *Flag* was George H. Harrison. In less than a year, he sold the paper to its original publisher, James D. Ferguson (Ferguson had published a paper in Livingston since leaving Tuscaloosa). Ferguson, in turn, soon formed a partnership with Robert A. Eaton, and the two hired in the early summer of 1837 a new editor, Samuel A. Hale. This native of New Hampshire came to love the South, although he remained a firm unionist. He gave the *Flag* four years of vigorous leadership. In June, 1838, he purchased Ferguson's interest and became co-owner as well as editor. In 1840 James Phelan became Hale's partner by buying Ferguson's interest. A lawyer by background, Hale was direct in debate, preeminently concerned with politics, and a staunch foe of both nullification and Whiggish doctrines. Hale's fractious spirit and the lingering effect of the Panic of 1837 upon subscribers and advertisers ate into the *Flag's* dominance. The paper encountered increasing competition, first from the Whigs and then from state-rights partisans. By the early 1840s, Hale was under fire for delays in state printing. His unswerving support of the union Democrat position stood against growing state-rights fervor. In 1841, Hale successfully supported Governor Arthur P. Bagby to replace the retiring Clement C. Clay as a state senator. He thus angered members of the state legislature who were also candidates. In 1842 the *Flag* lost the state printing contract to an outside competitor, Samuel F. Rice of Talladega. Under these circumstances, Hale sold his interest in the *Flag* to Jacob Harris, foreman of the *Flag's* printing shop. Hale retired to nearby Livingston to practice law.¹³

The first competitor to exert pressure upon the *Flag* was the *Independent Monitor*. This paper was begun in June, 1837, by Marmaduke J. D. Slade, about whom little is known. The editor of the *Monitor* was Alexander M. Robinson. Robinson,

chives and History, Montgomery, and Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

¹³Willis Brewer, *Alabama: Her History, Resources, War Record and Public Men from 1540 to 1872* (Montgomery, Ala.: Barret and Brown, 1872), 731, quotes Hale in later life as saying:

. . . secession of the Southern states [was] the most stupendous act of folly the world has even seen. If the headstone of my grave should bear no other inscription, I would have it there recorded, that I was opposed to secession.

For Hale's newspaper career, see Simms, "A Study of the *Flag of the Union*," 41-84.

a veteran Tuscaloosa journalist, has been mentioned previously in connection with other newspapers. He came from Kentucky in 1827 and became editor, later also co-owner, of the *Sentinel*. After that paper failed, Robinson moved to the *Spirit* as editor. A contemporary described him:

To a vigorous intellect he brought a fair degree of cultivation, and by his wit and humor, together with his remarkable figure and cadaverous appearance, he soon became a noted character in Tuscaloosa. His mind was original; his conclusions quick, and his phrases emphatic; he was at once a stoic and a poet. he seemed to have little knowledge of men or of the world practically, and was eminently a book made man He was cynical, and on some subjects fanatical But still Mr. Robinson was a remarkable man.¹⁴

Robinson introduced a literary column to the *Spirit* and published poetry as well. Politically, he espoused state rights, at least until 1837. After the *Spirit* was absorbed by Brumby's *Expositor* in late 1832, Robinson moved to the *Intelligencer*, purchasing it in partnership with John G. Davenport in 1834. Robinson and Davenport in turn soon bought the *Expositor* from Brumby, when the later joined the University of Alabama faculty. In 1837 Robinson became editor of the *Independent Monitor*. Although proclaiming political independence, the *Monitor* became the town's Whig newspaper. Robinson, however, died suddenly in September, 1838, at the age of forty-four, before the *Monitor's* Whig posture became pronounced. He may have been more an anti-establishment person than either a nullifier or a Whig since he spent his life in competition with newspapers that won the state printing contract.¹⁵

After a brief interval of interim editorship following Robinson's death, William Russell Smith became editor of the *Monitor*. Like Meek of the *Flag*, Smith went on to a remarkable career in both literature and politics. In 1838 he was only

¹⁴Smith, *Reminiscences*, 45-48, also speaks favorably of Robinson's poetic abilities.

¹⁵Smith's reference above is the only known biographical information on Robinson available.

twenty-three years old. Already he had written and published the first volume of original poetry in the state, written the state's first original drama (performed in Mobile), and published Alabama's first literary journal (also in Mobile). Although Smith and Hale of the *Flag* disagree editorially, their exchanges lacked the usual vehemence. Hale, in fact, editorially expressed his admiration for Smith's qualities, even in opposing his politics. Smith's energetic manner soon led him into politics. He became mayor of Tuscaloosa in 1839 and resigned as editor of the *Monitor*. In 1841 and 1842 he served in the state legislature as a Whig but was defeated for re-election as an independent. He then moved to Fayette, where he practiced law and served as a brigadier general in the state militia before entering national politics.¹⁶

Samuel F. Rice, who won the state printing contract in a close contest from the *Flag* in 1842, experienced great difficulty as an editor but had a successful political career. A native of South Carolina, where he attended college and initially practiced law, Miller moved to Talladega in 1838. There he practiced law and for six years edited *The Watchtower*. In 1841 he was elected to the state legislature and demonstrated skill as a debater. As state printer, he had difficulty securing the size type required by law for the work and had to make a joint arrangement with Slade of the *Monitor* in order to complete the contract. His attempt to establish in Tuscaloosa a newspaper, the *Banner of Alabama*, was short-lived, in spite of offering the cheapest subscription rates in town. The *Banner* lasted only about three months, and Rice retired from

¹⁶Smith was elected to the House of Representatives for three consecutive terms in the 1850s. Pro-union, he supported the Constitutional Union ticket in the election of 1860 and was elected to Alabama's secession convention as a cooperationist. He refused to sign the ordinance of secession but raised a regiment for the Confederate army and was elected to the Confederate Congress with a pro-unification stance. After the war he was unsuccessful in securing political office, served briefly as president of the University of Alabama, and retired to Washington, D.C., as a lawyer and writer. See Owen, *Biography of Alabama*, IV, 1597-98; Anne Easby-Smith, *William Russell Smith of Alabama* (Philadelphia: Dolphin Press, 1931); Hallie Farmer, "William Russell Smith," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), XVII, 367; and Smith's own *Reminiscences*. For his literary career, see Williams, *A Literary History of Alabama*, 28-39. For his years as editor of the *Flag*, see Simms, "A study of the *Flag of the Union*," 62-64, and Hill, "A Study of the Leading Newspapers in Tuscaloosa, 1837-1865," 8-9. Smith's surviving personal papers, dealing primarily with the years 1861-65, are in the Easby-Smith Papers, Library of Congress.

the Tuscaloosa newspaper scene.¹⁷

After Hail left the *Flag*, that newspaper soon was taken over by the state-rights faction of the Democratic party. As the national elections of 1844 approached, the *Flag* had come out for Martin Van Buren for Democratic nominee for president. To provide the Calhoun faction with a newspaper voice in the state capital, John McCormick, owner of the Greensboro *Beacon* announced plans to publish the *Alabama State Journal* in Tuscaloosa. Background details are lost in unrecorded history, but in December, 1843, McCormick purchased the *Flag* from Phelan and Harris. McCormick's new paper was published as the *State Journal and Flag*.¹⁸

The union Democrat partisans made an effort to recover. Robert A. Eaton, who had been a co-owner of the *Flag* from 1837 until 1840, when he sold out to Phelan, launched the *Democratic Gazette* to champion Van Buren. Eaton and his backers, however, failed in the legislature to wrest the state printing contract from McCormick, and the *Democratic Gazette* ceased publication in December, 1844.¹⁹

McCormick still faced a strong competitor in the *Independent Monitor*. Stephen B. Miller had become editor of this paper in 1840, and he had engaged in heated editorial exchanges with McCormick's predecessors, Eaton, Hale, and Phelan. By September, 1844, Miller and McCormick had quarrelled to such an extent that a public altercation ensued. After engaging in face-to-face argument in front of a local hotel, the two wrestled over a pistol (apparently drawn by McCormick). No injuries occurred, and the two thereafter confined their battles

¹⁷No known copies of the *Banner* survive. Its history can only be traced through references to it in the *Flag*. See Simms, "A Study of the *Flag of the Union*," 83-84. Rice later practiced law in Montgomery and served as Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court from 1856 to 1859. His political career after leaving Tuscaloosa was remarkable for its variety. He was in turn a Democrat for Zachary Taylor, a southern rights Democrat, a Know-Nothing, a secessionist, and a Republican. See Owen, *Biography of Alabama*, IV, 1435; Brewer, *Alabama*, 470-71; and William Garrett, *Reminiscences Of Public Men in Alabama for Thirty Years* (Atlanta, Ga.: Plantation Publishing Company, 1872), 194-95.

¹⁸*Flag of the Union*, November 29, 1843.

¹⁹*Democratic Gazette*, December 21, 1843. The last known issue of this paper (December 19, 1844) makes no mention of curtailment. The first year's subscriptions expired at that time, and failure to secure the state printing contract in the 1844-45 legislature no doubt sealed the *Gazette's* fate.

to editorial columns.²⁰ Miller also struggled with his own publisher, M. D. J. Slade, over whether or not to endorse a Whig candidate for governor.²¹

Miller's last run at McCormick before the capital was moved from Tuscaloosa to Montgomery concerned the contract for state printing. As noted before, McCormick inherited the favored position enjoyed by the *Flag* in this matter. Miller joined with other newspapers around the state in agitating that the state printing contract be put on a bid basis. These efforts were successful, and the contract for the 1846 session was let out for bid, after vigorous debate in the legislature. McCormick, however, halved his previous prices and won the contract.²²

Miller and McCormick did not always disagree. The one issue that united them above all else was resistance to removal of the capital from Tuscaloosa. Both editorially resisted removal but unsuccessfully.²³ McCormick prepared for the change wisely. He formed a partnership in late 1846 with John T. Walshe, owner of the *Montgomery Advertiser*. After removal of the capital to Montgomery had been decided, McCormick announced that the two papers would be joined as the *Flag of the Union and Montgomery Advertiser*. He sold his Tuscaloosa assets to James M. Warren, a former newspaper associate of William Lowndes Yancey.²⁴ After the last issue of the *State Journal and Flag* was published on Christmas Day, 1846, its offices, equipment, subscription list, and Democratic tradition were taken up by Warren's *Observer*. Miller and the *Independent Monitor* remained Tuscaloosa's champion of the Whig party.

Thus, Tuscaloosa's newspapers of the capital period not only reflected the impact of political currents of the day but provided in the person of John McCormick part of the frame-

²⁰*Independent Monitor*, August 28 and September 4, and 18, 1844. McCormick also published a campaign sheet, the *Democratic Mentor*, in Tuscaloosa from March to November, 1844.

²¹*Independent Monitor*, July 16, 23, and 30, 1845.

²²*Independent Monitor*, September 3 and December 31, 1845, and February 25, 1846; and *State Journal and Flag*, January 16 and March 27, 1846.

²³See Malcolm C. McMillan, "The Selection of Montgomery as Alabama's Capital," *Alabama Review*, I (April, 1948), 79-90.

²⁴Screws, "Alabama Journalism," *Memorial Record*, II, 171.

work for the establishment of the capital press corps in Montgomery. The shearing issues of secession were in the future, but the history of Tuscaloosa's capital newspapers illustrates the difficulty in the period of maintaining consistent political positions, the evolution of state-rights strength, and a significant core of unionism that was to persist to the very day of secession.

RACIAL INFERIORITY, CONVICT LABOR, AND
MODERN MEDICINE:
A NOTE ON THE COALBURG AFFAIR

by

Robert David Ward and William Warren Rogers

The twists and turns of policy that have marked the history of the Alabama penal system have generated argument and intellectual ferment through the decades. The state penitentiary was established in 1839, but operating costs led to the adoption of the private lease system in 1846. With differing leasees, the practice continued until 1862. The state operated the prison during the Civil War, but the Penal Code of 1866 permitted the convicts to be leased to the highest bidder. The return to private leasing contained a new provision: the prisoners could now be worked outside the prison grounds. Despite periodic reforms regarding the care and treatment of both county and state convicts, convict leasing continued until the twentieth century and was not ended until 1927.¹

¹Governor Rufus W. Cobb, "History of the Penitentiary," in *First Biennial Report of the Inspectors of Convicts to the Governor, from October 1, 1884 to October 1, 1886* (Montgomery, 1886), p. 348. The best study of the Alabama penitentiary system is Jack Leonard Lerner, "A Moment to Shame: The Convict Lease System in Alabama" (Unpublished M. A. thesis, Samford University, 1969). See also Elizabeth Bonner Clark, "Abolition of the Convict Lease System in Alabama, 1913-1928" (Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Alabama, 1949); R. H. Dawson, "The Convict System of Alabama, As It Was And As It Is," in Safford Berney, *Hand-Book of Alabama: a Complete Index to the State, with Map*, 2d and rev. ed (Birmingham, 1892), pp. 254-266; Malcolm Moos, *State Penal Administration in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa, 1942); Allen J. Going, *Bourbon Democracy in Alabama, 1874-1890* (Tuscaloosa, 1951).

By the 1890s most of the prisoners, state and county, were worked in coal mines. The mines lay in Alabama's mineral belt centering around Birmingham and Jefferson County. A limited but articulate group of reformers protested the system's evils, but its defenders were powerfully entrenched wielders of economic and political power. While much of the debate centered on the issues of penal organization and convict treatment, some led into different areas and illuminated other subjects. Such was the case in the 1895 medical investigation of the Coalburg prison that brought on pamphlet warfare among the participants, and thus froze their arguments for a later time.

Early in 1895 the Jefferson County Board of Health became increasingly concerned over information that the Sloss-Sheffield Company's prison at its Coalburg mine was experiencing abnormally high mortality rates. The labor force was composed predominantly of black county convicts. The board's concern led to the appointment of Dr. Thomas D. Parke, the public health officer of Jefferson County, to make an investigation and render a report.² The physician began his investigation on 14 March 1895, but it was not until early August that his report was published as *Report on Coalburg Prison by Thomas D. Parke, M.D., Health Officer of Jefferson County*.³

Reporting to the board, Parke opened with a brief statement of his mission, and explained that on his first visit to Coalburg he had realized the complexity of the mortality subject. Inspecting the premises was not enough to lead to "in-

²There were 2 reports on Coalburg. The first was made by Dr. Jerome Cochran, state health officer for Alabama, and Dr. Judson Davie, physician inspector of the convict department. The second was made by Dr. Parke. The 3 doctors had been appointed to work together, but Cochran and Davie had interpreted their mission in narrow fashion, while Parke went beyond the bounds of usual investigations. Unwilling to accept the conservative and routine summary of Cochran and Davie, Parke issued separately his own minority report. Cochran and Davie concluded that "there is something in the life of the miners and in the work of the mines that is inimical to the physical welfare — to the health and longevity of our negro convicts." The physicians agreed that separate T. B. facilities were needed and that more sunlight was necessary. They did not mention the curative powers of soap and water, and stressed the need for disinfectants. Their report, a monument to the futility of statistics, was "Report of the State Health Officer to the Governor on Coalburg," *First Biennial Report of the Board of Inspectors of Convicts to the Governor: From September 1, 1894 to August 31, 1896* (Montgomery, 1896), pp. I-XXVIII.

³It was published in Birmingham by Roberts and Son.

telligent conclusions." Far more medical data was necessary, and Parke submitted his own list of questions to the company. While the officials seemed cooperative, many of his questions remained unanswered. In a judgement not likely to please the prison doctor, Parke concluded that there was a lack "of adequate and full hospital records."⁴

Records or not, Parke was confronted with a mortality rate of 90 per 1,000 at Coalburg. That was higher than the rate at the Pratt mines where convicts were also worked, and appallingly higher than Jefferson County's general rate of from 8 to 11 per thousand or its black mortality rate of from 18 to 25 per 1,000.⁵ Why were too many convicts dying at Coalburg? It was not the food or the drinking water, said Parke, nor could he find any evidence that the nearby coke ovens were injurious to health. Existing records showed that tuberculosis was the greatest cause of death, and Parke repeated the long accepted verity that blacks were "naturally susceptible" to the disease.⁶ Other explanations had stopped at this point, but Parke went further. The records also showed a large number of cases of diarrhea and dysentery, and there were disturbing signs of septic conditions.

The company's own figures indicated that in the last two years 15,467 man-days of labor had been lost due to sickness and confinement in the prison hospital. Parke then discovered that a "fair percentage of sickness has been what is called 'sore-leg.'" The malady began with an abrasion or cut followed in a few days by inflammation and soreness. In the luckier patients the problem ended there. In the less fortunate there was a progression of high fever and "burrowing of pus along between the planes of the muscles." The difficulties

⁴Parke, *Report on Coalburg*, pp. 1-2.

⁵Convict mortality rates in Alabama were a subject all to themselves. Parke's cited rate of 90 per 1,000 at Coalburg differed from other reports, but seemed to be accepted by the Sloss Company. See Cochran, "Report of the State Health Officer," and *Report of Special Committee [of the Legislature] to Investigate the Convict System, 1897* (n. p., n.d.), p. 12.

⁶The use of chewing tobacco was widespread — it was a part of the convicts' weekly issue — and the resulting spitting must have spread the tuberculosis bacilli at alarming rates. On the other side of the coin it had been believed that blacks were immune to yellow fever, a point disproved by Benjamin Rush in 1793. See Francis R. Packard, *History of Medicine in the United States* (New York, 1963), I, pp. 126-27.

might go on for months, sometimes killing the patients or "debilitating them to that degree that their systems offer a most favorable soil for the bacilli which tubercular patients in adjoining beds furnish them in abundance."⁷ Parke at first suspected that 'sore-leg' was a scorbutic condition, but he now pronounced — with a certainty he did not explain — that it was erysipelas, an infection caused by the invasion of streptocci bacteria.

Here, to Dr. Parke, was a sally port against disease. Tuberculosis lay beyond the physician's intervention, but erysipelas could be attacked and eradicated. In an age of antibiotics it is hard to measure how early Thomas Parke was applying the fruits of research. The bacteria causing erysipelas had not been identified until 1883 by Friedrich Fehleisen, and the standard antiseptic procedures were still those of Joseph Lister — most notably the use of a spray of carbolic acid.

What was needed at Coalburg, Dr. Parke told the Sloss officials, was the rigid application of aseptic procedures. Every cut should be thoroughly washed out and bandaged so that further filth and water could not reach it. Cleanliness was the key. Parke was promised cooperation, but he found that dressings were inadequately applied and the Coalburg staff uncooperative.⁸

If Parke had concluded his report at that point he might have done no more than bruise the feelings of Dr. F. P. Lewis, the prison physician. But it was not enough to stop erysipelas, or isolate tubercular patients, or recommend that convict work hours be changed so that they received more sunshine. Parke went on to quote the prison mortality rates for other states, and a rate of 40 per 1,000 for Mississippi and only 15 per 1,000 for Virginia suggested a fundamental fault in the Alabama system.⁹ Of course the Sloss officials seemed cooperative — "they recognized, like the slaveholders of old, that from

⁷Parke, *Report on Coalburg*, p. 6.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

⁹The convict inspector's own figures since 1873 had made it plain that convicts worked in agriculture had much lower mortality and sickness rates than those worked in the coal mines. The greater the divergence of rates, the louder the lamentations over the awful necessity of keeping convicts in the mines.

a commercial point of view, if from no higher, the health of the man is requisite to a full return on the investment. But the evils of the system, like that of slavery, are inherent."¹⁰ Park then concluded his report with an accurate excoriation of the county convict system. As many would have put it, Dr. Parke "had quit doctoring and gone to preaching."

There was no question that the Sloss-Sheffield Company was stung by the Parke report. It was not the findings of erysipelas that were dangerous for public consumption, and the company had ridden out worse storms of a statistical nature. The threat and the danger lay in Parke's argument that the convict lease system was inherently wrong, and that it was producing its inevitable fruits in the high mortality rates.

Only a few weeks after the publication of Parke's report, a pamphlet appeared in Birmingham entitled *Facts About Coalburg Prison. Dr. Parke's Report Reviewed*.¹¹ Prepared by J. W. Castleman, the assistant to the Sloss president, it included a letter from Dr. F. P. Lewis, the Coalburg physician. Castleman open his rebuttal on minor points concerning the "supposed high death rate." It was news to him and certainly only recently that anyone had known that tuberculosis was contagious. Henceforth the company would rectify the situation by separating its patients.¹² Both Dr. Parke and Dr. Lewis were eminent physicians, although Parke "was without-special experience in the matter." The issue of the 'sore-leg' was merely a doctors' quarrel over the proper mode of treatment. Was it true that conditions in coal mines were inherently bad? Yes, it was. It was clear that miners could not do their work in the sunshine, and "the Sloss Company cannot undertake to put skylights in the roof of its mines."¹³

According to Castleman, Parke's report was based on a fundamental error. Dr. Parke was guilty of poor research; he simply did not understand the white-black mortality ratio. It was well established by prison records in Alabama that

¹⁰Parke, *Report on Coalburg*, p. 11.

¹¹Published in Birmingham by Patch Stationery.

¹²The contagiousness of tuberculosis had been proved by Jean Antoine Villemin in 1865, although the tubercule bacillus was not isolated by Robert Koch until 1882.

¹³*Facts About Coalburg*, pp. 5-6. It was doubtless true that Castleman's facetious humor made no impression on Parke.

3.69 blacks died for every 1 white. The ratio stemmed from the fact that under unfavorable conditions "the physical inferiority of the negro race becomes manifest."¹⁴ The number of deaths among free citizens in Birmingham showed the same ratio, and the Northern mortality figures when multiplied by 3.69 were in line with Southern rates.¹⁵ Mississippi, with a predominance of black prisoners and a death rate of 40 per 1,000, was explained by Castleman with the admission that they were employed in the inherently healthy occupation of farming. This would seem to have established Parke's point, but Castleman was not deflected from his conclusive logic. If a black's "comparative death increases at an accelerated ratio under confinement, and we are yet compelled for the good of society to so confine him, what reproach is it that we can not alter a law of nature and keep his death rate down to the white basis."¹⁶

It only remained for Dr. Lewis to close out the rebuttal. He was so obviously offended by Dr. Parke's observations and so upset to be challenged on his own ground that his attitude detracted from his argument. Parke, in his "sensational report" had been guided by "intuition, not by facts."¹⁷ Parke had made only 6 visits to Coalburg, and he had erroneously reported that the prison was made of logs rather than of planks. As for Parke's diagnosis of "endemic, infectious erysipelas," Lewis argued that no patient operated on in his hospital had ever had it and that no one with a laceration had contracted it. Moreover — and this was the scariest of his medical conclusions — "I have frequently gone direct from the

¹⁴Castleman quoted Dr. R. M. Cunningham, the prison doctor at the Pratt mines for this precise ratio.

¹⁵Were the blacks in Birmingham also under Castleman's "unfavorable conditions?" The figures for 1894 show that the death rate for blacks in Birmingham was 19.7 per 1,000 compared to 9.8 per 1,000 for whites. The 3.69 correction figure for white rates comes out much too high, but it should be remembered that the black and white rates included women and children. It was easy to be diverted to the question of rate differences and to lose sight of the rate itself.

¹⁶*Facts About Coalburg*, p. 10. Castleman also argued that Pratt mines' lower mortality was the result of having only first class convicts — graded by physical condition to perform the most demanding tasks — while Coalburg was required to take all classes of county convicts. It was true that the state system attempted to remove convicts from the mines if they could not perform any work, but, contrary to Castleman, Pratt worked all 4 classes of state convicts.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 13.

hospital to attend obstetrical cases, and I have never had a case of puerperal fever."¹⁸

Plainly, the 'sore-leg' was not erysipelas, and the clinching proof was that Lewis had seen cases of 'sore-leg' among people who had never been near the prison or the mine. Lewis simply refused to recognize erysipelas by any name other than 'sore-leg' no matter where he saw it. With that logic the company rested its case.

It would be interesting to have heard the discussions generated by the Sloss rebuttal. But it is certain that Dr. Parke was not content to let the matter rest in the company's corner. Somewhat delayed, Dr. Parke published his second pamphlet in December 1895: *Coalburg Prison. The Health Officer of Jefferson County to the Board of Convict Inspectors*.¹⁹

First, Dr. Parke took up the 'sore-leg' issue. Addressing doctors in his first report, said Parke, he had assumed certain matters without explaining them. In the beginning he had decided to "make a further test of the germs found in the tissues." He took fluid samples from the infections of 2 patients and "cultivations were made according to recognized methods and the micro-organism characteristic of erysipelas was grown in abundance and demonstrated under the microscope."²⁰ Dr. Lewis' treatment had consisted of spraying the infection with a "little bi-chloride of mercury . . . without previous thorough cleansing with soap and water and dressing with iodoform." There was, after all, "no guess work about this." The treatment utilized by Lewis had been demonstrated "beyond discussion."²¹ The worst part of the situation was that "for dreary years erysipelas has been allowed to attack men in this prison, and I hold that enough suffering and pain has already been unnecessarily endured to warrant the most energetic measures."²²

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 16. Puerperal, or "child-bed," fever was the scourge of maternity cases, and doctors as prime carriers had been demonstrated by Ignaz P. Semmelweiss in the 1840s.

¹⁹Published in Birmingham by Roberts, 1895.

²⁰Parke, *Coalburg Prison*, p. 2.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 4. Parke observed that modern bacteriology might solve many prison problems, and he suggested the employment of a trained man to check on various sources of infection.

As to the white-black mortality ratio and the major argument against him, Dr. Parke made his point in short order. The 1891 prison statistics for Georgia showed a death rate from all causes of 28 per 1,000. The year ending 1895 showed less than 23 per 1,000. "No one can claim," wrote Parke, "that this death rate is low, and yet compared with the 90 per 1,000 of Coalburg it seems very low indeed. They have the same preponderance of colored prisoners, and they get them from [county] jails."²³ In Georgia more prisoners were leased to railroad, lumber, and farming interests than to coal mines. As shameful as convict leasing was in Georgia (the state abandoned it in 1908), it was less brutal than the system in Alabama. The difference was that Alabama worked convicts in coal mines — and that was the point Parke had made the first time.²⁴

There was no further reply from the Sloss Company, and the debate ended with Parke having at least the last printed word. Far more than that, Parke had applied the techniques of the new field of bacteriology to penal health — and thus to the general welfare. In his advocacy of going beyond anti-sepsis to asepsis he acted out on the local level, and remarkably early, the larger struggle in the medical profession between the new advance and the established idea.

The controversy failed to produce any results that were immediately beneficial. Unfortunately for the convicts, conditions would get worse before they got better. In the next decades various laws required better health care for prisoners. But the lease system lingered until 1927, and until it was abolished, no permanent improvements could be made. Yet Parke had rendered a significant service: he told others that working convicts in mines yielded disastrous results, not because blacks were inherently inferior but because the system was inherently wrong. This was public health at its broadest and its best.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁴A. Elizabeth Taylor, "The Origin and Development of the Convict Lease System in Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (June, 1942), pp. 122, 127-128.



Grace, Marchioness Curzon of Kedelston, portrait by
John Singer Sargent

Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire



LADY CURZON, THE MARCHIONESS FROM DECATUR

by

F. Russell Bryant

Traditionally Great Britain has been a haven for diverse ethnic groups, which, for whatever reasons, have found it desirable to leave their homelands. In the footsteps of the Huguenots, Jews, Orientals, and European nationalists, the Americans in the 19th and 20th centuries began to appear. Some were Southerners, escaping the consequences of the Civil War; others, such as Henry James, the vulgarity of the Gilded Age. Still others were the daughters of New England millionaires, who sought to add prestige to their families by marrying into the British aristocracy. The 1920s found two Alabamians in London, each making a mark on British social history. The first and most famous was Tallulah Bankhead. Beautiful, witty, and highly talented, she became the first American actress to succeed on the London stage. She portrayed herself as an Alabama belle and helped to establish the popularity of the Southern accent with the English upper classes. The other was Grace, Marchioness Curzon of Kedleston. As wife of the British foreign secretary in the post World War I era, she was one of the most important society figures in Britain. She is generally given credit for popularizing cocktails with British society. In their obituary of her the *Times* of London described Lady Curzon as "a woman of elegance and great beauty" who conquered English high society.¹ Unlike Tallulah, who never forgot her origins, Grace Curzon became thoroughly British. That she was from Alabama, few would have guessed.

¹The London *Times*, July 1, 1958. Hereafter cited as *Times*.

Tallulah made her way in the world on the strength of her dramatic talents and wits; Grace, largely by luck, inherited wealth, and the generous application of charm and hospitality. As a socially ambitious American, she was enormously successful. She surpassed Lady Astor and Wallis Simpson in winning acceptance by all ranks of London society; in her day she was only exceeded by the Duchesses of Marlborough and of Roxburghe in reaching the upper ranks of the peerage. Whereas none questioned Grace's beauty, some found her captivating, others thought her vain and self-centered. Still she lived a life rivaled by few. She saw more glamour, pomp, and privilege than anyone born in Alabama.²

Not surprisingly, Lady Curzon's story is not well known in Alabama and her name, when mentioned, usually produces quizzical expressions. Most of what has been published in Alabama journals, either during her life or afterwards, contains inaccuracies; beginning with a 1923 suggestion in the *Montgomery Advertiser* that she met her famous English husband in Brazil,³ to an article in the *Huntsville Times* in 1977 that had her mother buried in the Maple Hill cemetery in 1883.⁴ The authors of *The Story of Decatur, Alabama* were not even certain that she was born in the Burleson-Hinds-McEntire House.⁵ One account, the suggestion that Lady Curzon's first husband was a Tennessee meatpacker, led her daughter, Marcella Rice, in 1977 to complain to a distant relative in Huntsville about the numerous mistakes that continued to be made.⁶ The object of this paper is to make available to students of Alabama history a brief account of Lady Curzon's extraordinary life.

Grace Curzon's family, the Hindses, emigrated to America

²Although Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt nee Frank Crawford of Mobile — the Commodore's second wife — had access to a greater fortune (and was largely responsible for the funding of what came to be Vanderbilt University), Grace Curzon remained the only Alabama-born female to acquire a title and social standing in the Old as well as the New World.

³*Montgomery Advertiser*, May 22, 1923.

⁴*Huntsville Times*, June 19, 1977.

⁵William H. Jenkins and John Knox, *The Story of Decatur, Alabama*. (Decatur, 1970), 131. They thought she might have been born in a Hinds house that formerly stood behind the Burleson-Hinds-McEntire House.

⁶The complaint was in the form of a letter dated December 12, 1977, in private hands.

from England in the early seventeenth century. The first three generations settled in the colony of New Jersey; the fourth in North Carolina, where some of them served in the Revolutionary armies; various members of the fifth generation relocated in Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. One branch of the Hinds family that settled in Kentucky later moved on to Illinois. Here Grace's father, Joseph Monroe Hinds, was born in 1842, as had been her more famous uncle, Jerome Jasper, four years earlier.⁷ At the outbreak of the Civil War, the five Hinds brothers enlisted in the Union forces. In 1862 Monroe and Jerome joined the newly formed First Alabama Cavalry whose commanding officer, the dashing but incorrigible George E. Spencer of Nebraska would play an important role in their later lives. During the war Spencer managed to ingratiate himself with Ulysses S. Grant, while Jerome rose to the rank of captain and Monroe to second lieutenant.⁸ In 1865 they were mustered out at Huntsville, eventually settling in Decatur. Through Hinds Brothers & Co., Jerome, Monroe, and a third brother, John Baxter, pursued commercial interests, soon acquiring control of the local shipping and stage coach lines, and investing in real estate;⁹ Spencer set up a law practice pursuant to a political career.

The long road that brought Grace into the ranks of the British establishment had its beginnings in the unscrupulous and ruthless politics of the Reconstruction era in Alabama. With state politics now controlled by Republican carpetbaggers and scalawags, the ambitious Jerome and Spencer evidently bought enough votes to get themselves elected to public office in 1868: Jerome to the Alabama Senate and Spencer, aided in part by Grant's election to the presidency that year, to the United States Senate. Once in ear-shot of Grant, Spencer was able to control federal patronage in Alabama for at least a

⁷Information on the Hinds family can be found in a folder under that heading in the Heritage Room of the Huntsville Public Library; particular reference should be made to the genealogical essay "Hinds of Knox County, Tennessee, and Wayne County, Kentucky."

⁸William S. Hoole, *Alabama Tories, the First Alabama Cavalry, U.S.A., 1862-1865*. (Tuscaloosa, 1961), 85, 138, 140; Spencer and the Hinds brothers marched with Sherman to the sea.

⁹Thomas M. Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, 4 vols. (Chicago, 1921), III, 815. Also see the Decatur newspaper *Alabama Republican*, December 9, 1868, which contains a Hinds Brother & Co. advertisement, with Monroe listed as General Superintendent.

decade.¹⁰ For the Hinds brothers Spencer's influence became a bonanza. Jerome became Spencer's agent in the sales of public offices; he reportedly bought Spencer's re-election in 1872.¹¹ By appointing relatives to key places in the postal system, the Hinds brothers acquired a hefty share of Star Route contracts for the delivery of rural mail.¹² More important for Grace, Jerome was able to procure from Spencer an attractive appointment for Monroe to the United States Mission in Brazil.¹³ Although he was now prosperous, Monroe's new post carried with it a handsome salary of \$6,000 a year.¹⁴ He was only thirty years old.

In later years Grace, in various public releases about her origins, described her father as minister to Brazil. As the *United States Statistical Record* clearly shows Monroe was not that; he was the consul-general at Rio, the second ranking position.¹⁵ Perhaps her error was indicative of sensitivity about her origins; it can not have been a mistake. While in Brazil, Monroe married the beautiful Lucy Trillia, the daughter of a wealthy Anglo-Italian family from Buenos Aires with business holdings in Rio. Monroe remained in Rio until 1878,

¹⁰Sarah W. Wiggins, *The Scalawag in Alabama Politics, 1865-1881*. (University Alabama, 1977), 57, 71; Walter L. Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*. (New York, 1905), 737.

¹¹See the sundry charges in *Report of the Joint Committee of the General Assembly of Alabama in Regard to the Alleged Election of George E. Spencer as United States Senator*. (Montgomery, 1875), hereafter cited as *Report of the Joint Committee*; also see *Charges and Specifications Preferred by the State of Alabama Against George E. Spencer, and submitted to the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, 1874*. Some of the tactics used by Spencer and Hinds are described in a set of protests filed under the date May 25, 1871, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Presidential Papers Micro-film, reel 3; Fleming also describes some of Spencer's antics (756-60) while Hoole asserts that Jerome Hinds was one of the most disliked carpetbaggers in the state (140).

¹²Sarah V. Woolfolk, "Carpetbaggers in Alabama; Tradition vs Truth," *Alabama Review*, XV (April 1962), 138. *The United States Statistical Record, 1877*. (Washington, D.C., 1878), 451, 457 shows that the Hindses also had mail contracts in the Arizona and Idaho territories. Hereafter cited as *U.S.S.R.*

¹³The *Report of the Joint Committee* contains numerous testimonials that Spencer controlled all Federal appointments involving Alabama as well as the testimony of J. R. Horner that Spencer offered him a diplomatic appointment (lxxxvii).

¹⁴*U.S.S.R.*, 1878, 12.

¹⁵In *Reminiscences* (London, 1955), 9, Grace wrote that "While still a young man, my Father was appointed U.S. Consul at Rio de Janeiro. . . . He was promoted to Consul General, and finally to U.S. Minister to Brazil." Hereafter cited as *Reminiscences*. The *U.S.S.R.* shows he was and remained consul general the whole time; the minister for the period when Monroe should have been by Grace's account was an Alabamian, Henry W. Hilliard, 1877-1881.

coincidentally the year Spencer lost his bid for reelection. Already parents of two children, the Hinds were resettled in Decatur in time for Grace to be born there that same year.¹⁶

The Hinds returned to one of the finest homes in northern Alabama, the Burleson House. It had been one of the two houses left standing at the war's end within the city limits. Built in 1824 along the banks of the Tennessee River, the mansion of red bricks was three stories tall with four columns on the front and a widow's walk — which had in turn served the Confederacy and Union well during the war.¹⁷ With dowry money from his new wife Jerome had bought the house from the Burlesons in October 1869 for \$5,000. In January 1870 he sold part interest in it to Monroe.¹⁸ Evidently the three brothers and their families, and even Spencer lived there together for a while.¹⁹ According to tradition Grace was born in the second floor bedroom on the northeast corner overlooking the Tennessee River.²⁰ The earliest description of her is found in a letter Lucy penned to Monroe in the summer of

¹⁶Although Grace gave no clues as to her age in either her autobiography or her entries in *Who's Who*, the United States Census Report for Morgan County in 1880 shows her age in that year as "1½" (1880 Census Population Schedule, Alabama, Morgan County, National Archives Micro-copy # T-9, Roll # 27).

¹⁷A brief history of the house, entitled "The McEntire Home" was written in 1937 by Mrs. Ben Britnell and was passed on to Ann Tankerley nee McEntire, the present owner of the house. During the Civil War both sides used the house as headquarters. Supposedly Albert Sidney Johnston, C.S.A., planned in the dining room his tactics for the Battle of Shiloh in 1862, while the following year Grant and Sherman met there after the fall of Vicksburg.

¹⁸The deeds are filed as (D) M/250 and (D) K/357 at the Office of the Probate Judge of Morgan County, Decatur, Alabama (hereafter cited as O.P.J.D.). This was only the beginning of a curious pattern of ownership transference among the brothers and Jerome's wife, Cornelia, that probably reflected a desire to avoid losing the house, owing to law suits against Jerome. On June 14, 1870 Monroe sold his share of the house back to Jerome for twice what he had paid [(D) L/33]. In 1871 Jerome divested himself of all claims to the house in favor of Cornelia [(D) M/359-361]; Cornelia then sold the house to John B. Hinds in August, 1872 for \$8,000 [(D) M/373-376]. Two months later John sold it back to Cornelia for the same sum [(D) M/495-497]. She evidently neglected to pay the taxes, for Lucy Hinds acquired ownership by court action in 1879 for \$54.85 [(D) X/59].

¹⁹*Report of the Joint Committee*, lxxxvii. Complementing the testimony before the Joint Committee that Spencer lived with the Hinds is a photograph of the Hinds family with Spencer and his daughter in front of the house in the early 1880s. The photograph belonged to Lady Curzon and is now owned by her daughter.

²⁰Huntsville *Times*, March 1, 1936.

1878. In it she wrote "Baby is hight [*sic*] as ever."²¹ That Grace would live a charmed life was first evidenced when she escaped the ravages of the yellow fever epidemic that struck Decatur in November 1878.

When Grace was four, the family moved to Huntsville. Although the Republicans had lost control of the state's political offices as the Reconstruction era drew to an end, they still controlled federal appointments. Either through Spencer, who still had some influence on the Alabama appointments, or through Jerome, now a deputy collector in Alabama for the Internal Revenue Service, or through some other power broker, Monroe was appointed marshal of the Northern District of Alabama, Fifth Circuit.²² For the next four years the Hindses lived modestly in Huntsville in a frame house on Grove Street until it partially burned, then moved to a smaller dwelling at the corner of Madison and Gates.²³ For Monroe and his family the four years at Huntsville were not pleasant ones. Besides the loss of their first home, the Hindses had to cope with the stigma of being carpetbaggers, Republicans, and employees of a court system held in contempt by the local population. Moreover, their two eldest children died. Monroe did gain some favorable publicity when he brought to trial Frank James, the brother of Jesse.²⁴ He supplemented his meager salary as marshal — \$200 a year — with Star Route mail contracts obtained through the Republican patronage system. In 1881-1883 he had thirty contracts totaling \$11,776 and for the next two years thirty-one totaling \$12,344.²⁵

²¹Lucy Hinds' letter was undated but she enclosed with it a second letter she had just received from her sister-in-law, dated June 3, 1878, that she was forwarding to Monroe at once. This packet of letters was found by Leroy McEntire behind a mantel in the Hinds-McEntire home some fifty years ago.

²²One of Spencer's election agents, A. R. Baker, had held the same office earlier and Spencer had also secured the position of marshall of the Southern and Middle Districts for Jerome Hinds briefly in 1872 (see *Report of the Joint Committee*, lxvi and clvii).

²³Although the Grove Street house was repaired — the roof had burned — it subsequently fell into disrepair. Saved from demolition in the 1970s by Leon Hinds, it was recently sold, and moved to Steel Street, where it is being restored by David Parrish, the artist. The house at Madison and Gates, where the Hindses lived, 1883-1886, was eventually demolished.

²⁴Huntsville *Times*, March 1, 1936. James was acquitted in the April 1884 trial, but rearrested on leaving the courthouse for crimes committed elsewhere.

²⁵*U.S.S.R.*, 1883, II, 22-24 and 1885, II, 26-27.

In her autobiography, Grace mentioned Huntsville largely in reference to the deaths of her elder brother and sister, which left her with a fear of death and an early interest in religion.²⁶ She also started to school. While living in Huntsville she gained a new brother and sister; the latter, Anita, would, like Grace, opt to live her adult life in England. In a Huntsville *News* article, written in the 1930s, the author asserted that "Grace played in the area around Big Spring. Old timers remember her as a bright child who appeared on the streets with long curls that her mother tediously wrapped."²⁷

The family returned to Decatur in 1886 following the termination of her father's appointment as United States marshal. By now the Democrats had captured the White House with the election of Grover Cleveland in 1884, and Republican control over federal patronage ended for the foreseeable future. The family fortunes now began a descent that would parallel Grace's fate in the 1930s. By 1887 Monroe had lost all his mail contracts and Jerome not only his legislative seat but his I.R.S. job. In that year the brothers decided to subdivide the four lots that surrounded the Burleson Home.²⁸ Jerome regained ownership of the Burleson House which he converted into the Park Hotel.²⁹ That venture was not a success, and his growing indebtedness obliged him to sell the house in 1894 to H. S. Freedman for \$10 and "other considerations."³⁰ Monroe retained the rear part of the property on which he built a two-story frame house with twelve rooms. Grace was always associated with this house by those who subsequently could remember playing with her as a girl. The construction of the house at a time of declining revenues landed Monroe in even worse financial trouble, and he appears to have been somewhat dependent on his brother-in-law, John Trillia, for

²⁶*Reminiscences*, 10.

²⁷Huntsville *Times*, March 1, 1936.

²⁸O.P.J.D. (D) 31/455.

²⁹*Ibid.*, (MC) 2/25. This move probably reflected the general belief that Decatur was in the midst of an economic boom (see the booklet on the city put out by the Decatur Land Improvement & Furnace Co., in 1887 at the Wheeler Basin Regional Library). The reappearance of yellow fever in 1888 ended the boom as well as the lives of thirty-five citizens (see John Knox's *A History of Morgan County*. [Decatur, 1967], 218).

³⁰*Ibid.*, (D) 43/327.

funds.³¹ In 1894 Monroe sold his house to Trillia for \$7,000;³² the brother-in-law gave it back two years later for \$1.³³ Although the family shortly thereafter left Decatur, Grace's mother continued to pay the taxes on the house until 1928. The following year she lost ownership of it at public auction for \$24.77³⁴ at a time when Grace's own financial woes were first beginning. Then in a state of disrepair, the frame house shortly thereafter was pulled down.

Writing in her mid-seventies Grace devoted two pages of her autobiography to her early years in "the sleepy town" of Decatur. She described a way of life that the war had destroyed for many Southerners: living in a lovely antebellum mansion with faithful servants — "Uncle Odie" and "Aunt Mary" — a garden "enchanted and typical of the South," carriages and horses at her disposal. To this picture of Southern gentility, she added:

On the other side of the Tennessee River we had a large plantation, and cotton fields. It was wonderful to watch the Negroes picking cotton in the hottest month — August — the women and girls with their heads tied in bright bandannas, the men and youths in gay shirts, singing as only Negroes can sing.³⁵

Like a Southern belle she could watch from her veranda the cotton pickers in the distant fields, fields that are now flooded by T.V.A.

It is tempting to suggest that this image of the Old South was partly inspired by the book or the film version of *Gone With The Wind* that took London by storm in the early years

³¹The O.P.J.D. records show that there was a judgement against Monroe in December, 1891 for \$7,500 for non-payment of bills (JDA/24); another in April, 1895 for \$325 (JDA/65).

³²*Ibid.*, (D) 43/196.

³³*Ibid.*, (D) 44/420. There is a curious document in (D) 43/549 which suggests that the sheriff sold the house at public auction on October 7, 1895 for \$440 owing to Monroe's non-payment of the judgement mentioned in the latter part of footnote # 31. As the house did not belong to Monroe, the sale would have been illegal.

³⁴*Ibid.*, Tax Record 4/177. Why Lucy did not sell the house after 1896 is not clear.

³⁵*Reminiscences*, 10-11.

of World War II. The picture she painted of her Southern background was certainly grander than reality permitted. Her parents were not plantation owners, though they did own four of the various cotton fields visible across the river. On arrival in 1878 Lucy had bought as an investment seven hundred and twenty acres. They were promptly mortgaged, apparently rented out,³⁶ and in 1894 were lost to a British mortgage company, which in turn had to wait six years to find a new buyer for the low-lying fields.³⁷ Moreover, by the 1890s the Burleson home was practically a ruin and presumably the garden with it.³⁸ Not surprisingly, she did not mention the clapboard frame house where she lived from about 1887 until 1894. Still she retained fond memories of the Burleson house, keeping a picture of it all her life; and in later years she remarked to her daughter several times how she would like to see it again.³⁹

Grace appears to have been a popular little girl with her neighbors and their children, descendants of whom recalled their parents telling of playing with Grace, dirtying their clothes sliding down the red clay banks in the neighborhood.⁴⁰ Clara Berry Sanders remembered her mother telling a story that suggested that Grace was a thoughtful and well brought up adolescent. Her mother, Evelyn Wyker Hunt, had a Victorian playhouse equipped with a workable miniature iron range, on which her girlfriends would prepare meals. When it came time to clean up, invariably, only Grace would stay to help.⁴¹ For a while she went away to a private school, but for financial reasons she ended up at the Decatur public school, largely attended by poor whites.⁴²

³⁶The "1880 Agricultural & Manufacturing Census Records" for Limestone County do not list the land as being farmed by the Hindses (microfilm produced by the University of North Carolina Library, reel 228).

³⁷Deed Books 18/276-277 and 68/341 of the Limestone County Probate Judge's Office, Limestone County Archives and Plat Book # 3, township 4, range 5, section 25, 31, 35, and 36 of the Tax Accessor's Office, Limestone County Courthouse, Athens, Alabama.

³⁸"The McEntire Home," 4.

³⁹The remark was made by Lady Curzon's daughter to a distant relative from Arab, Alabama in 1978.

⁴⁰Telephone interview on September 18, 1981 with Marjorie Pointer Garner of Decatur, Alabama.

⁴¹Telephone interview on September 18, 1981 with Clara Berry Sanders of Newnan, Georgia.

⁴²*Reminiscences*, 10-11. It proved impossible to identify the private school she attended.

Idyllic though Grace tried to paint her childhood, she had to admit there was a jarring note: her family were carpetbaggers and disliked by many in Decatur. Even Grace could sense that they were not deemed socially acceptable by some of the older families of Decatur. "A certain sense of strangeness and discomfort surrounded us there, Republicans in an area of Democrats, Episcopalians in the midst of Methodists."⁴³ I was conscious of this feeling even as a child attending the local school," she subsequently wrote.⁴⁴ Having regained control of public offices in the 1870s and federal appointments in the 1880s, Southerners were now practicing a policy of ostracism for the remaining carpetbaggers and scalawags somewhat akin to the policies of the Irish Land League vis-a-vis English land owners in Ireland. As the Alabama historian Sarah Wiggins has noted, "Ostracism was all too real for most Republicans."⁴⁵ Decatur seems to have been a place where Republicans had been marked for persecution, according to one eyewitness, "in all possible way and manner."⁴⁶

This ostracism appears to have had a profound impact on Grace. It left her feeling an outsider with no attachment to her locality or even to the country of her birth. More importantly, the resentment she felt created in her a desire to prove Decatur wrong for shunning her family and herself. In an age when options for ambitious women were limited, she ultimately turned to the most glamorous one available and one for which she had great talent, that of a grande dame of society. She evidently concluded that she would not suffer social ostracism again. Of the numerous American society hostesses found in London just before and after World War I none had as unnerving a childhood, or for that matter as modest a background, as Grace.⁴⁷ None was more successful than she was

⁴³This remark about Methodists is somewhat curious since her Uncle Jerome was one; perhaps she meant Baptists.

⁴⁴*Reminiscences*, 10.

⁴⁵Sarah W. Wiggins, "Ostracism of White Republicans in Alabama during Reconstruction," *Alabama Review*, XXVII (January, 1974), 64.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 59.

⁴⁷Nancy Astor nee Langhorne was actually born poorer than Grace but her family's fortune steadily increased, while Grace's declined. Moreover, as a child of an old Virginia family, she experienced none of the ostracism Grace did. Laura Corrigan was also poorer than Grace as a child — her father was a carpenter and for a while she was a waitress in Chicago — but she entered the social scene about the time Grace left it (see Ruth Brandon's *The Dollar Princesses*. [New York, 1980], 143-44).

in winning acceptance by all ranks of British society.

By way of digression it should be noted that Grace's subsequent career was not unlike that of another extraordinary Alabama female, Alva Smith of Mobile. In the 1880s and 1890s Alva enjoyed the same social success in New York society that Grace came to achieve in London in the early twentieth century. The daughter of a Southern planter ruined by the war, Alva was determined to add a new chapter in the history of her ancient family. In 1874 she married W. K. Vanderbilt, the grandson of the Commodore. Shortly thereafter, she built the largest mansion in New York City, then forced the "Mrs. Astor" to call on her. She next pushed the Vanderbilts into the center of New York society, and in 1895 made her only daughter, Consuelo, marry the ninth Duke of Marlborough. Ultimately, she abandoned the United States for France where she continued to build mansions until her death in 1933. It is tempting to suggest that Grace modeled herself on Alva but there is no evidence to prove it. Neither was Alva well known in Alabama when Grace was growing up nor does Grace mention Alva in her autobiography, though their paths probably crossed at some point in the 1920s. Still the similarities of their lives suggest that Grace's response to her Alabama environment was not an isolated occurrence.⁴⁸

No doubt aware that the growing hostilities surrounding Grace were having an unfortunate impact on her, the Hindses decided to send her to South America to be educated. At about the age of sixteen, she left Decatur with her uncle and aunt from Rio, then on a world tour. She took away only psychological scars; she had learned none of the skills that would later make her a successful hostess. At most her subsequent interest in horse racing might have stemmed from a love of horses gained in Decatur. Still, she later wrote that "My heart was broken" at having to leave and, if permitted she would have jumped off the train.⁴⁹ That probably was more a

⁴⁸Although there is no biography of Alva Vanderbilt, her life is sketched out in James Brough's *Consuelo. Portrait of an American Heiress*. (New York, 1979). A portrait of Alva hangs at Oakleigh in Mobile donated by Consuelo.

⁴⁹*Reminiscences*, 12. In the autograph book of one of her girlfriends, Vera Austell, Grace promised her enduring friendship "tho' oceans may divide us" (taken from a scrapbook of newspaper clippings and other information entitled "The Life of Grace Hinds Curzon, Marchioness Curzon of Kedleston," compiled by Leon Hinds

reflection of the love she had for her parents and neighbors whom she was leaving behind than Decatur itself.⁵⁰

Her heart mended by the time she reached Washington, where she met her first celebrity, ironically Grover Cleveland.⁵¹ The experience of her first trip and meeting celebrities also made a positive impression on her. She would subsequently devote much of her life to travel and to entertaining famous politicians and grandees. She never returned to Decatur and it is easy to get the impression that she regarded her years in Alabama as a chapter in her life that, while formative, she wished closed. The tone of her autobiography gives the impression that she was proud of being a Southerner but not necessarily an Alabamian.⁵² She could identify with the love of grace and hospitality for which the old South was famous; she could not identify with the brutality and violence that came increasingly to characterize a segregated Alabama. Only once prior to the publication of her autobiography in 1955 did it become public knowledge in England that she was from Alabama.⁵³ She never included this information in any of her entries in *Who's Who*. When the mother of a childhood friend from Decatur, Mrs. John D. Wyker, then visiting London in the 1920s tried to reopen that chapter, Grace refused to see her. The snub shocked people in Decatur who had only pleasant memories of Grace as a young girl, and it is still

in the Heritage Room of the Huntsville Public Library). The autograph book has since been lost.

⁵⁰After Grace's departure, her family did not linger much longer in Decatur, owing to their financial plight. Within a year they had emigrated to Buenos Aires. Evidently Monroe eventually became uncomfortable living off his in-laws. With the aid of his sister, Mrs. Em Griffeth, one of the earliest women civil servants in Washington, D.C., he got an appointment after the Spanish-American War in the postal service of the newly annexed Philippines. There he died in 1901. His body was returned to Huntsville and buried with those of his children in the Maple Hill Cemetery. His wife chose not to accompany him. After coming into her inheritance, she settled in London, with two of her children, Trillia and Anita; her other son, Albert, remained in Buenos Aires, where he prospered in business. By the time Monroe's family left Decatur, Jerome had moved to Washington, where after abandoning his second wife Clara, he rejoined the army and fought in the Spanish-American War. The only Hinds left in Decatur was John Baxter, who had managed to retain his appointment as postmaster.

⁵¹A visit arranged by her Aunt Griffeth, who was also her Godmother.

⁵²In *Reminiscences*, 9, she stresses the fact that though her father and his brothers fought in the "Northern Army", they were "Southerners."

⁵³In the *Times* obituary of her first husband, she was described as "Grace Elvina Trillia, daughter of the late Mr. J. Monroe Hinds, of Alabama, U.S.A." (November 8, 1915).

remembered today.⁵⁴ It certainly discouraged others from calling on her. Hudson Strode's observation in *South by Thunderbird* that Grace never failed to entertain royally old friends from Decatur appears, with one exception, unfounded.⁵⁵

Grace's world tour lasted nearly a year and included most of the principal sights of Western Europe and the Levant.⁵⁶ She fell in love with London and Paris, enjoyed visiting relatives in Italy, and was even captivated with Constantinople. Owing to her attractiveness, she was frequently handed flowers by young, starry-eyed Turks. Such attention must have enhanced her growing sense of femininity and awareness that she was good looking. She would subsequently spend large sums on dresses — principally by Worth — and jewelry to accentuate her beauty. She would also commission the principal portrait painters of her day, John Singer Sargent, Phillip de Laszlo, and Sir John Lavery, among others, to record it.⁵⁷

Once settled in Buenos Aires with rich relatives, Grace commenced a way of life in marked contrast with the modesty of her upbringing in Decatur. At this point Argentina was an economic colony of Britain and the life style of the wealthy

⁵⁴There are several versions of how the snub took place. One is that Mrs. Wyker knocked on the door of Carlton House Terrace, identified herself to the butler; he returned with the message "Her Ladyship is not receiving." Another is that Mrs. Wyker phoned and received back such a message. In the post World War II period a former neighbor and childhood friend, Mrs. Foster H. Pointer was in Britain with her family. Someone suggested looking up the famous Lady Curzon. Mrs. Pointer declined for fear of "getting that same kind of cold shoulder as Mrs. Wyker" (interviews with Kathleen McEntire, November 21, 1978 and Ann Tankerley, August 25, 1981 at Decatur, Alabama; telephone interviews with Marjorie Garner and Clara Sanders, *op. cit.*).

⁵⁵Hudson Strode, *South by Thunderbird*. (New York, 1937), 240-41. The 1936 article in the *Huntsville Times* reported that Henry Scott of Atlanta was well received by Grace on a visit in the 1930s; that he was an old friend of the Hinds' from Decatur.

⁵⁶Grace wrote that she left when she was fifteen which would make the year 1893; that she crossed the Atlantic on the maiden voyage of the S.S. Furst Bismarck; that the boxer, Jim Corbett, was a fellow passenger; and that they arrived in England in March. There are several problems here. Firstly, the maiden voyage of the Bismarck was in 1891; Corbett crossed in the autumn of 1894; and the published schedule of the Bismarck shows no crossing in February or March. Presumably she was sixteen and the crossing was in the autumn of 1894. This matches the purchase of the Hinds home by Grace's uncle from Rio (see above footnote 32).

⁵⁷The portrait by de Laszlo is in the possession of her heirs; the one by Sargent, at the Tate Gallery, London; the one by F. M. Bennett hangs at Kedleston, and the Lavery is at the National Gallery of Art, Edinburgh. Rodin wanted to do a bust of her, but to her subsequent regret, Alfred refused to allow it.

was modeled on that of their English counterparts. Although an outsider, Grace found herself popular and presumably came gradually to realize how much she enjoyed being a member of society. Ultimately, she concluded that she had enormous talent as a hostess. She took Spanish, voice, riding lessons and went for carriage rides in the afternoon along the Palermo to the fashionable Calle Florida where tea would be taken at Agulia's. Some afternoons she drove to the River Tigre to watch the regattas. "My coming-out ball took place when I was seventeen, and after that I had a gay time of dances, balls, and picnics."⁵⁸ Her other activities included hunting and peregrinations from one grand house to another. A little later she began making yearly trips to London to do her shopping. One popular pursuit of hers, that has long since ceased to be the prerogative of the rich, was roller-skating. It was, in fact, owing to her fashionable American skating boots, that she caught the eye of her future husband.⁵⁹

In 1902 Grace married Alfred Duggan, the scion of a wealthy Argentinean family. Among other properties, the Duggans owned eighteen plantations and vast herds of sheep and cattle. One estate that Grace subsequently inherited had on it a private railway line nearly ninety miles long. As a wedding gift from her mother-in-law, she received a large house, completely furnished. The honeymoon was spent in England, where she attended Ascot for the first time. In due course, Grace became the mother of two sons and a daughter. Having seen social life in London, she eventually wearied of the limited social life of Buenos Aires and began spending a large part of each year in England. Eventually, the Duggans came to feel more at home there than in the Argentine.⁶⁰

At this point Great Britain was at the height of her worldly success. The Empire covered one-fifth of the globe, the Royal Navy controlled all the sea lanes, and London was the world's financial capital. It was also the Edwardian era, when British society entertained on a scale never previously or subsequently surpassed — the heyday of fetes and balls and of the weekend in the country. Although Paris glittered,

⁵⁸*Reminiscences*, 21.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 13-21.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 22-27.

Edward VII during his decade as King-Emperor made London the most brilliant capital of Europe. Naturally it was a magnet for someone as eager to prove herself a great hostess as Grace Hinds Duggan.

In 1906 the Duggans decided to move to London, ostensibly in order to raise their two sons as English gentlemen. As a social entree, Alfred got himself made an honorary attache to the Argentine Legation. In order to secure the blessing of her father-in-law for the move, Grace was obligated to carry with the family to England a cow, a calf, six turkeys, and a large bevy of chickens. Senor Duggan was much worried about the quality of fresh milk and food his grandchildren would receive on a long sea voyage. On arrival Grace wasted no time in securing temporary accommodation in one of London's best neighborhoods, Eaton Square, and soon leased not far from London a small country estate, Burfield, near Windsor adjacent to the royal park.⁶¹

Grace began her conquest of British society on a modest scale. Her first parties were small affairs, usually weekends in the country. One imagines that she missed no opportunity to extend her contacts and learn the ways of a successful hostess. As she got to know people, she entertained more lavishly. By 1913 she had become sufficiently well established to make the Court Circular for the first time.⁶² From then until 1956 it recorded her various entertainments, and, once she was titled, her various trips and illnesses. While certain older circles remained closed to the wife of an Argentinean diplomat, she was, at least at this point, being invited to all of society's gala affairs. In 1913 Alfred's father died, leaving him a fortune in the millions. Grace could now rent a home in the most prestigious neighborhood in London, Grovenor Square, the future site of the American Embassy. By the eve of World War I she was entertaining there the Prime Minister, H. H. Asquith, who had an eye for attractive young ladies, cabinet members, and the leading literary figures of the day.⁶³

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 27-34.

⁶²It read "The Earl and Countess of Portalington and the Earl and Countess of Drogheda will be the guests of Mrs. Duggan at Burfield, Old Windsor, for the Household Brigade Steeplechases at Hawthorne Hill on Friday and Saturday" (*Times*, April 14, 1913).

⁶³*Reminiscences*, 44-48.

Her success was largely due to her good looks, taste, expensive clothes, and common sense. In a monarchical society dominated by old families, she opted to present herself as "an old fashioned admirer of dignity and deportment."⁶⁴ She was greatly helped in being "launched" by the success of her first appearance at Court, just behind Nancy Astor, in 1907. King Edward too had an eye for beautiful women and found her so stunning that he singled her out for special attention.⁶⁵ Presumably that also helped to get her invitations accepted by the smart set within London society. She made friends easily with the English yet did not shun all fellow Americans. One of her first acquaintances was Lady Randolph Churchill, Sir Winston's dazzling mother. Another was Consuelo, Duchess of Marlborough, Alva Smith's beautiful but unhappy daughter. While London society included quite a few American women, Grace was somewhat unique. She was not brassy like Nancy Astor, iconoclastic like Lady Randolph, or unpredictable like Lady Cunard. She was dignified, restrained, and dutifully respectful of convention. This ultimately made her acceptable in almost all quarters.

By the time war broke out in 1914 Grace had become a respected member of London society. Although by no means was she one of the grand dames, her hospitality was readily accepted. She was also on the verge of another great turning point in her life: in 1914 Alfred contracted a strange ailment which confined him to a nursing home. She saw no reason to play the role of a bedside wife. Her philosophy was "I have always believed that if you take a gay and cheerful view of things, other people are more likely to share your view than not." She enjoyed giving and going to parties because "there was always some fun to be got out of every social event, however solemn and formal."⁶⁶ Entertaining continued to fill a psychological need to be wanted and appreciated. Instead of withdrawing from her busy social life to be with Alfred, she continued entertaining within the limits imposed by the war as well as now doing society war work. She participated in bazaars, arranged concerts, ran her own convalescent home for Belgian soldiers, and organized money raising fetes. Her

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 33.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 150.

most notable fete was in May 1915 in aid of the War Emergency Entertainments at which the Queen's sister-in-law, Princess Alexander of Teck, represented the Royal Family.⁶⁷ In all she raised over one hundred thousand pounds for the war effort. At the same time, she took it upon herself to secure the admission of her two sons, Alfred and Hubert, to England's most exclusive private high school, Eton. In the autumn Alfred died of pneumonia, leaving her the bulk of his fortune.⁶⁸ Grace at thirty-seven was a multi-millionairess and the wealthiest widow in London.

Despite her wealth, her social position was not secure. She had no natural niche in British society upon which to fall back, no ancient family which was recognized as a pillar of society. She owed her place to her lavish entertaining that after 1915 she had to curtail. As a new widow, she was expected by society to withdraw into a lengthy period of mourning. Once that was over the exigencies of the war would prevent any return to the pre-1914 scale. Moreover, her rapid rise had created enemies, and one of her few weaknesses as a society figure, the banality of her own conversational skills, had made her a subject of derision in some circles.⁶⁹ Her schooling in Decatur and Buenos Aires had not prepared her to discuss at dinner the intricacies of French literature or the symbolism in Shakespeare. After meeting her for the first time, the Minister of Education in 1916 described her simply as "statuesque and stupid."⁷⁰ At some point in 1916 she seems to have committed an enormous faux pas. She accused the prime minister's wife, the sharp-tongued Margot Asquith, of having ordered from the famous provisioners Fortnum & Masons, a food parcel for a German prisoner at Gallipoli. Grace had witnessed the purchase from a nearby counter but had misunderstood what was said. She had the sense to apologize and to remain on good terms with Margot, who accepted

⁶⁷*Times*, May 22, 1915.

⁶⁸*Reminiscences*, 45-50.

⁶⁹Lt. Colonel C. A. Court Repington noted in his diary for July 16, 1916 of Grace "she is a very pretty women, most charming and restful, but has got many enemies, probably because she is such a success" (*The First World War, 1914-1918. Personal Experiences*, 2 vols. [London, 1920], I, 280).

⁷⁰H.A.L. Fisher to Lettice Fisher, December, 1916. Fisher Papers, Box 5, Bodleian Library, Oxford, England. Fisher's opinion did not change on getting to know Grace better. Writing in 1922 he declared: "Grace Curzon (stupid as ever)" (Box 5).

the apology but who probably said some pretty devastating things behind Grace's back.⁷¹ Although Grace prized the freedom Alfred's death had brought her, she nevertheless needed a new husband to protect her in more ways than one.

Unbeknownst to Grace, she had already caught the eye of one of Britain's most eligible widowers, Earl Curzon of Kedleston. Curzon was a member of a famous noble family which had first come to England with William, Duke of Normandy in 1066, eventually settling in Derbyshire. In the eighteenth century the great architect and interior decorator, Robert Adam, transformed the family seat, Kedleston Hall, into what remains one of England's most beautiful homes. There George Curzon was born in 1859. His precociousness led many to expect great things from him. He did not disappoint them, winning most of the principal prizes at Eton and Oxford. Interested in politics, he moved from one Parliamentary triumph to another, becoming in 1898 the youngest person ever made viceroy of India. He was thirty-nine. By then he was the father of three daughters through his very happy marriage to Mary Leiter, the daughter of a wealthy Chicago meatpacker. In 1905 after a highly successful though somewhat controversial period as viceroy, he resigned. Shortly thereafter, in rapid succession, his political party, the Conservatives, which had dominated Parliament since 1896, was swept out of the office, and his beloved Mary died of heart failure. Her death created a void in his life that could not be filled, and the loss of political office placed him in the political wilderness, where he remained for ten years. In 1915 the vicissitudes of war led to the formation of a coalition government in which Curzon became lord privy seal. At fifty-six George began a political comeback; a new chapter in his life commenced.⁷²

⁷¹Margot certainly told her daughter-in-law, who recorded the story in her diary (Lady Cynthia Asquith, *Diaries, 1915-1918* [London, 1968], 446). According to Lady Cynthia's account, Grace mistook Margot saying "Donnington Hall" for "the Dardanelles."

⁷²There are three complete biographies of Curzon: the official one by the earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, 3 vols. (London, 1928); Leonard Mosley's *Curzon, The End of an Epoch*. (London 1960); and Kenneth Rose's *Superior Person*. (New York, 1969). A biography concerned only with Curzon as foreign secretary is Harold Nicolson's *Curzon: The Last Phase, 1919-1925*. (New York, 1939).

Curzon's period out of office had one consolation: it enabled him to devote much time to spending that part of the Leiter fortune entrusted to him. Although Curzon was Mary's heir, the bulk of her father's fortune was entailed in trusts for Mr. Leiter's granddaughters, with George as the executor until they came of age. George was an heir in his own right, but so long as his father lived, the Curzon wealth was unavailable. Fortunately for him the Leiter revenues in themselves were massive enough to offer him a highly luxuriant life style.⁷³ He maintained three splendid residences. His London home was in one of the capital's most prestigious building complexes, Carlton House Terrace, that masterpiece of town planning by George IV and John Nash. It overlooked the Mall and St. James Park; Queen Alexandra the Queen Mother resided a few yards away at Marlborough House. George also leased two country estates. One was Dorset's most beautiful Renaissance mansion, Montescute, and the other was an eighteenth-century estate, Hackwood, in Kent, grand enough for the king and queen of the Belgians to use as a palace-in-exile during the first stages of the war. Each home had its own housekeeper, staff and complete sets of china, crystal, and silver. George also owned several historical ruins, such as the beautiful fourteenth-century Bodiam Castle in Sussex, with which he amused himself by supervising the restoration.

At fifty-six George still had three unfulfilled dreams. He desired an heir, wanted to be prime minister, and sought to cap his achievements with a dukedom. At his age he could only consider as a second wife a widow; for someone in his position a teenage bride was quite out of the question. She would have to be wealthy so he could continue to live the life style to which he was accustomed. His own financial difficulties dictated that. His father still lived and his three daughters would soon come of age. A new wife would also have to be a gifted hostess in order to cope with the hospitality required of a government official, a prominent member of society, and aspiring prime minister turned duke. She would also have to be young enough to produce the much sought-after heir.

⁷³Mary's father, Levi Z. Leiter, left an estate worth about thirty million dollars. The income on Mary's share provided Curzon with about a hundred thousand dollars a year (Nigel Nicolson, *Mary Curzon*. [New York, 1977], 17, 174).

In 1915 there was one pressing reason why George should begin looking for a new wife. Since 1908 he had been having an affair with the volatile, popular novelist, Elinor Glyn, whose husband was an invalid. For Curzon it was simply an affair of convenience. Suddenly in 1915 Mr. Glyn died, leaving Elinor free to remarry; and she expected a proposal from George. From George's point of view Grace was suddenly the answer to all of his problems. She had wealth, poise, beauty and was a gifted hostess; moreover, she had a proven track record with two sons and at thirty-seven she was still young enough to produce an heir.⁷⁴

George first saw Grace at a ball at Lady Londesborough's early in 1915. She was standing by a tall pillar in a pink formal dress. He was much struck by her beauty and, after their engagement, had her photographed in the same dress at the same spot. Shortly after learning that Grace's husband had contracted an incurable disease, George made his first move. He got his old friend, Violet, Duchess of Rutland, to invite Grace and himself to a dinner party. Thereafter they dined often together; he was soon a guest at her weekend parties in the country. After Alfred's death, Curzon joined Grace for Christmas, bringing his daughters, with whom she got along well. Hereafter George regularly brought up the subject of marriage. While flattered that a member of the British Cabinet, and so aristocratic a one at that, should be interested in her, Grace initially avoided the subject. She liked her freedom and felt her children, especially her daughter, Marcella, who was still at home, needed her. Moreover, she was not enamoured with the idea of a betrothal to someone nearly twenty years older than she was.⁷⁵

For several reasons her mind changed in 1916. Gradually she began to realize how vulnerable her position was as merely the widow of an honorary Argentinean diplomat. Her attitude toward George changed. In March George's father died, thus easing his financial situation. At least he would not be marrying her solely for reasons of money. As the fortunes of the Conservative party continued to rise, so did George's. The time could not be far off when the present government would

⁷⁴Mosley, chapter 9.

⁷⁵*Reminiscences*, 46-68.

be reconstituted and George would hold one of the principal offices of state. As his wife she would not only be titled, but one of London's, and hence the Empire's, principal leaders of society; all doors would be opened to her at last. Moreover, the fulfillment of George's ambitions would earn her a place in the history books: she would be the first American wife of a prime minister. She would also be the first American to become a duchess by her own merits and not the millions of her father.⁷⁶ In the summer of 1916 she accepted George's proposal. By the time of the wedding in January 1917 the government had been reorganized with George a member of the powerful and exclusive War Cabinet and leader of the House of Lords. The new prime minister's wife, Mrs. Lloyd George, eschewed entertaining, thus creating a social vacuum into which Grace could move.⁷⁷ By virtue of a quiet wedding at the fashionable St. Margaret's Chapel, Westminster, Grace Hinds of Decatur, the daughter of an Alabama carpetbagger, became Countess Curzon of Kedleston, Viscountess Scarsdale, and Baroness Ravensdale, the principal social hostess of one of the most important governments in modern British history.⁷⁸ She was thirty-nine.

Grace now found herself in an even more rarefied world than the one in which she had been living. George was a close friend of various monarchs throughout Europe. After moving into Carlton House Terrace, one of her first telephone calls was from Albert, King of the Belgians. When Albert identified himself as such, she thought the call a hoax and retorted "Is it really? And this is Queen Anne!" She apologized.⁷⁹ George was good friends with the royal family, who wished to meet the new Lady Curzon. Grace soon found herself at Windsor chatting with Queen Mary, who told her of having received a favorable report from Princess Alexander on the

⁷⁶Three of the four American born duchesses — the dowager Duchess of Manchester (Consuelo Yznaga), the Duchess of Marlborough (Consuelo Vanderbilt), and the Duchess of Roxburghe (May Goelet) were the daughters of New York millionaires; the Duchess of Manchester (Helena Zimmerman), the daughter of a Cleveland millionaire.

⁷⁷Mosley, 177-78.

⁷⁸The *Times*' wedding announcement gave no information about Grace's background other than she was the widow of "Mr. Alfred Duggan of Buenos Aires" (January 3, 1917).

⁷⁹*Reminiscences*, 90.

fete Grace had organized in 1915.⁸⁰ She got on well with King George with whom she shared an interest in horse racing. Throughout their lives George and Mary regarded Grace with affection and concern.

Grace also found herself appearing at public functions with George. Sometimes she would open a new canteen while he would orate on some aspect of the war. She continued her charity work and her entertaining.⁸¹ She incurred the opprobrium of several of the London dailies when she gave a coming-out party for one of George's daughters in 1918 while the fate of the war hung in the balance on the Western Front.⁸² More successful were her dinner parties and receptions for various Dominion prime ministers and Indian princes. She gave her first large official party as Lady Curzon in June 1918, overcoming various war-time difficulties, when all the living past prime ministers, the cabinet, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the various officials attending the Imperial War Cabinet Lloyd George had summoned, dined at Carlton House Terrace.⁸³ At Christmas when Woodrow Wilson visited London en route to the Peace Conference, Grace helped entertain Wilson's wife, with whom she had much in common.⁸⁴

With the return of peace in November 1918 and her husband's appointment as foreign secretary shortly thereafter, Grace could now fully assume the responsibilities as the principal governmental hostess. The Curzons' combined fortunes produced entertainment on a lavish scale. Through their doorways on a regular basis came the kings and queens of England, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal, the Prince of Wales, major world leaders, diplomats, British politicians, writers, plus

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 110.

⁸¹See for example the *Times* for April 23, 1917 and July 11, 1918.

⁸²*Reminiscences*, 86.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 131. Of this party Grace wrote "it was generally considered to have been a success," and then listed some of her dinner guests.

⁸⁴Edith Bolling Wilson, *My Memoir*. (New York, 1938), 205. Edith Wilson, who was six years older than Grace, was from an old Southern family which lost most of its wealth during the Civil War. After a modest childhood, she married a successful Washington business man, Norman Galt, who died young, leaving her at thirty-four a prosperous business. In 1915 she married Wilson, who was sixteen years older than she was. He died in 1924, a year before George. For the rest of her long widowhood she devoted herself to safeguarding her second husband's memory. After publishing her memoirs, she died in 1961, three years after Grace.

prominent society members from New York, Paris, and London, all part of Grace's responsibilities as the foreign secretary's wife. She also had duties to perform at court whenever there would be royal levees for the diplomatic corps; these she especially enjoyed. "Before the entry of the King and Queen I had to be standing by the great doors leading to the throne room with the Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps. I still feel the thrill of excitement which the roll of drums and the National anthem gave me as the royal procession entered the throne room."⁸⁵

Entertainment on such a scale had its rewards. The Curzons received endless invitations. Grace's autobiography at this point reads like a catalogue of who entertained whom. Other rewards came in 1921 when the King raised George in the peerage to a marquis in recognition of his public service. Grace now became the Marchioness Curzon of Kedleston, the name by which she is remembered. Her reward for war service and her entertainment was to become the following year the first woman invested with the Grand Cross of the British Empire.⁸⁶

Although her life during this period is detailed in her autobiography, several of the more memorable soirees should be mentioned here. One was when the very rotund King of Persia, Ahmad Mirza Shaw, rolled down part of the grand staircase at Carlton House Terrace in full view of all her guests. Grace and the future George VI, by whom she was standing, were hard pressed to keep from bursting into laughter. On another occasion the butler, in lighting a cigarette for

⁸⁵*Reminiscences*, 115. Grace's description continued:

As soon as the King and Queen had taken their place on the dais my train would be taken from my arm and spread. I would make three low curtseys at the entrance of the throne room, take a few steps forward with the Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps holding my hand, which he would release while I made three more curtseys — then a curtsey to the King, a curtsey to Queen Mary, and another curtsey to the King and he took my hand to help me up on to the dais. There I would stand until the ladies of the Diplomatic Corps had passed. I would then step down from the dais, curtsey again to the King and to the Queen, and walk to my seat near the dais, where I had to remember not to sit down until all the Ambassadors and the other gentlemen of the Diplomatic Corps had passed, because the King and Queen were still standing.

⁸⁶The fact that she was first was partly because "Curzon" came before "Hughes" in the alphabet; she shared the award with Mrs. Billy Hughes, the wife of the Australian prime minister during the war (*New York Times*, January 2, 1922).

the queen of Portugal, accidentally set fire to her veil. The mischievous Lady Cunard promptly turned to Grace and — in a tone of reproachment — remarked “Gracie! The Queen of Portugal is on fire.” The unflappable Grace coolly responded “Oh, so she is!” The queen was duly extinguished.⁸⁷

One of the innovations Grace introduced into the socials of her day was cocktails. Coming from a part of the states where cocktails, such as mint juleps, were popular, Grace was aware of their social usefulness at an early age.⁸⁸ Although “American bars” could be found in Paris and London before the war, the presence of so many American troops helped popularize cocktails even more. Grace found them useful in entertaining, especially international guests who did not share the English love of sherry, and she frequently had a cocktail bar at her soirees. In her autobiography she devoted a few lines to the utilitarian value of cocktails along with George’s response to this innovation.

In those days, just at the end of the 1914 War, cocktails were considered rather an innovation where formal entertaining was concerned, but many of the younger people liked them, and they helped to make a party ‘go’. I knew that it would have caused delays and complications upstairs if they had been handed round in the drawing-room before dinner, and so I decided to have a cocktail bar in a room off the hall, where our guests could have a drink before coming up to the drawing-room. The first time that I arranged this, I had it all done by Buck’s Club, and men in white coats with cocktail shakers were stationed behind a bar in the room on the ground floor. George, making a tour of inspection before the party, discovered this and could not imagine what it was for, because I had forgotten to tell him about it. He said to one of the men,

⁸⁷*Reminiscences*, 132-33, 135.

⁸⁸The origins of cocktails is obscure, but one of the places where they began was New Orleans. In the nineteenth century a cocktail consisted of alcohol, sugar, water, and bitters. There is some evidence that Grace’s father was a heavy consumer of them. Today still at George’s old college, Balliol, a “Lady Curzon” is served on special occasions. Grace’s friend, Lady Randolph Churchill was responsible for introducing the “Manhattan” cocktail in New York society (D. Wallechinsky and I. Wallace, *The People’s Almanac* #2. [New York, 1978], 431).

"Who are you?" and the man replied, "We're Bucks, my lord." This mystified George completely, and the man went on, "Will your lordship have a cocktail?" George then rose to the occasion, and asked, "What have you got?" A White Lady⁸⁹ was suggested, and George had one, which he swallowed without comment, and I don't think that he ever had another cocktail in his life.⁹⁰

The one person who never appears to have crossed the threshold of Carlton House Terrace was Tallulah Bankhead, whose success on the London stage started early in 1923 with "The Dancers." Although Grace attended the 1925 premiere of "The Green Hat," she seems never to have made any attempt to establish contact with her fellow Alabamian.⁹¹ Her friends, including Lady Cunard did, and Lady Diana Duff Cooper, the daughter of the same Duchess of Rutland, who had introduced George to Grace became, for a while, one of Tallulah's best friends.⁹² Possibly Tallulah's scandalous private life and fast living friends — the Bright Young Things — had something to do with it; perhaps she simply did not want to be reminded of her Alabama past.

Grace made one interesting foray into British diplomacy. At the Lausanne Conference in 1923 Grace briefly joined George, then in the midst of his most notable diplomatic triumph as foreign secretary. At a luncheon party she met Benito Mussolini, the new Fascist premier of Italy. She conversed with him in Spanish; he to her in Italian. She admonished him for not being able to speak English, now the principal language of modern diplomacy. Eager to live up to the image of a man of action, he agreed to start learning at once and promised to send her in exactly two months' time a letter he would have written in English. He sealed the promise by sending her the next day the largest basket of flowers she ever received. Exactly two months to the day Grace received his letter, which according to the New York

⁸⁹A "White Lady" consists of gin, Cointreau, lemon juice, and egg whites.

⁹⁰*Reminiscences*, 106.

⁹¹Lee Israel, *Miss Tallulah Bankhead*. (New York, 1972), 106. Neither Tallulah (*Tallulah*. [New York, 1952]) nor Grace mentioned the other in their respective autobiographies.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 84. Kieran Tunney, *Tallulah. Darling of the Gods*, (New York, 1973), 59.

Times was "a long breezy letter, even idiomatic in spots."⁹³ Whereas the New York *Times* seemed to have no doubts that Mussolini wrote it, Grace did not for a moment believe it; but since they never met again, she was unable to test his boast with a conversation.⁹⁴

The glamour of her public life helped to offset the vicissitudes of her marriage. During the war she took seriously her need to be by George's side in public. She also tried to produce him an heir. For whatever reason, and it is not clear what, the heir was not forthcoming. One doctor had suggested that George might have been the problem; that at his age his sperm count could have been inadequate for conception.⁹⁵ The blame, however, fell on Grace. George insisted she undergo an operation. It did not solve the problem and the pain involved seemed to have left a bitter aftertaste.⁹⁶ Moreover, Grace gradually came to realize how difficult it was to live with George. Although brilliant, he was a pompous workaholic, who could delegate little authority either to her or anyone else. He usurped many of the responsibilities that by right were Grace's: menu-planning, the hiring of staff, the distribution of books to weekend guests, the household accounts. Only because he disliked organizing receptions did he leave that responsibility to her. Moreover, he wanted her to conform to the mold of marriage that had characterized his relationship with Mary Leiter, over thirty years before. At that time, Mary's friends had been shocked at how she had subordinated her personality and interests in order to adopt to George's image of a perfect wife and to fit his career goals.⁹⁷ Whereas George loved Grace and very much wanted her affection, he seemed incapable at his age of adopting a new approach to marriage with someone nearly twenty years his junior.

Grace, in response, was not prepared to be dominated by George. She was too strong-willed, self-centered and youthful. She probably realized that she could never replace Mary Leiter as the greatest love of his life. She resented his interference

⁹³New York *Times*, October 10, 1927.

⁹⁴*Reminiscences*, 166-67.

⁹⁵Interview on September 25, 1981 with Omar Baker in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

⁹⁶Mosley, 179-80

⁹⁷Nicolson, *Mary Curzon*, 84.

in her traditional role as chatelaine of four great houses.⁹⁸ Within nine months of the marriage, she was complaining "George works so hard and sits up so late. He often doesn't come to bed till 2:30 but stays down writing out the menus for the servants in his different country houses."⁹⁹ She disliked his intellectual interests and found political talk boring. More than once she ruined serious after dinner conversations.¹⁰⁰ Although she enjoyed literature, social gossip was the normal extent of her intellectual interests. Not without reason was her conversational level described as "briskly banal."¹⁰¹ No doubt she felt ill at ease with some of the intellectual women George liked to invite to weekend parties.¹⁰² By 1919, a growing number of factors led Grace to complain openly about her marriage with George. One diarist, whom Grace hardly knew, recorded: "They say she is completely 'fed up' with George Nathaniel and I am not surprised."¹⁰³

The Curzon marriage can be divided into three phases. The first during which Grace conformed to George's wishes lasted until the end of the war. The second lasted until about the beginning of 1924. During this period Grace increasingly did as she wished when not otherwise obligated by duties as wife of the foreign secretary. Except when entertaining at Carlton House Terrace, she seldom stayed at home. She accepted the endless invitations that poured in. She traveled frequently to the Continent — receiving as the foreign secre-

⁹⁸In her autobiography, *The Glitter and Gold* (New York, 1952), 175, Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan gave an example of George's interference with Grace's responsibilities. On being shown her bedroom at Hackwood, Consuelo recorded Grace, then pointing to a stack of bedside books, as saying "George has chosen them, so you will like them. I had myself selected the books to be placed in every visitor's room, but when George inspected them he decided that I had not correctly assessed the literary tastes of our expected guests and after sending a footman with a tray to collect the books he made a new selection."

⁹⁹Asquith, 360.

¹⁰⁰Helen, Viscountess D'Abernon, *Red Cross and Berlin Embassy, 1915-1926*. (London, 1946), 46-47. Lady D'Abernon made the following entry in her diary for November 10, 1918 after dining at the British Embassy in Paris: "Grace Curzon rather handicapped conversation by a series of irrelevant remarks."

¹⁰¹Asquith, 412.

¹⁰²*Ibid.* Lady Cynthia Asquith speculated that Grace "will be greatly in the way of his debating society parties at Hackwood." Presumably she was referring to the legendary group of society figures, the Souls, that before the war was noted for the intellectual brilliance of their gatherings and of which George was a member.

¹⁰³A.J.P. Taylor (ed.) *Lloyd George. A Diary by Frances Stevenson*. (New York, 1971), 185.

tary's wife deluxe treatment everywhere she went — and took up horse-racing, which after the London season sent her to Goodwood, Ascot, Newmarket, and other turf gatherings. She became temperamental toward George and was often rude. Frequently she accused him of still having an affair with Elinor Glyn.¹⁰⁴ On their second anniversary she even refused to allow him to join her at Hackwood. He protested but it did little to alleviate her frequent absences from his side. She also periodically cut off funds to him, invariably creating a financial crisis. In the midst of a major European conference in 1920, George was obliged to interrupt his labors to complain to her "Today the bank returned to me your two cheques of June 6 and July 6."¹⁰⁵

The marriage survived because they were dependent upon each other; George needed her money, he had lingering hopes for an heir, and he realized that she was an asset vis-a-vis his further ambitions. Perplexed by her behavior, he still loved her, and as an indefatigable letter-writer, he inundated her with proposals of reconciliations. The answers were often not encouraging. His replies included "I was so hurt at your letter this morning," "I have got your nasty letters."¹⁰⁶ On one occasion her rudeness was too much for him to bear meekly, and he took away the master key to his various homes. It says something of her social position then that the king of England got it back for her.¹⁰⁷

Grace too wanted the marriage to survive, but on her terms. She enjoyed the life style her marriage to George provided. In her way she may have loved him. On New Years Day 1923 she wrote from St. Moritz, "I send you all of my fondest love and wish you ever so many happy returns of our

¹⁰⁴George's engagement had abruptly ended his affair with Elinor Glyn, the announcement appearing without her being forewarned in the *Times*. In a rage she burned all his letters and never spoke to him again. Mosley implies in his biography of Curzon that Glyn, suspecting competition from Grace, had modeled the character of the ambitious American millionairess, Mrs. Cricklander, in her novel *Halcyone* on her. *Halcyone*, however, was published some three years before George laid eyes on Grace (149-50).

¹⁰⁵Mosley, 179-80, 193-94.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 193-94.

¹⁰⁷Grace treated this as a joke in her autobiography (114-15), but in 1946 she repeated the story to Chips Channon as an example of George's temperamental behavior (see Robert Rhodes James, *'Chips': The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon*. [London, 1970], 414).

anniversary.”¹⁰⁸ She obviously did not feel the need to be with him on that occasion. She was prepared to admit that she had been at fault most of the time and explained it on grounds that “I really suffer from having too much in my life.”¹⁰⁹ No doubt at this point, she was very pleased with the extraordinary success she had made of her life. At times she must have found it difficult to believe she had once been a little girl in “Sleepy” Decatur. Still, life with George could be tedious and demanding at times.

Another reason she wanted the marriage to survive stemmed from her interest in producing an heir. Whereas there is no reason to suppose that Grace, having had three children and approaching her early forties, had a maternal desire to repeat the process, the advantages to her would still be great. A baby boy would link her family with one of the oldest in England, would prevent those titles earned by George’s public service from becoming extinct, would keep the Kedleston wealth within her family, and would provide security and station for her after George’s death. Consequently, she continued to seek medical advice and cures. On the recommendation of the queen of the Belgians, she quietly slipped out of England in the autumn of 1921 to undergo a hot mud treatment at Langenschwalbach, Germany, for five weeks. The visit nearly led to a serious injury when she got lost walking in the nearby forest. Before she could find her way out, the sun set, the temperature plummeted, and for a long time there was no moon. “The hills are very steep, with deep precipices at places,” she wrote George afterwards. “I pray hard to be found. I also remember pleading in my prayer, ‘My worst fault is only my extravagance.’” Troops, the police, and the staff of the spa combed the forests but it was her maid and chauffeur who eventually found her.¹¹⁰ For someone with a fear of death, it was a trying experience.

Almost as unpleasant was the mud treatment itself. Daily she had to immerse herself in hot, sticky mud. When she emerged — “I am just like Tar Baby (I wonder if you have read Brer Rabbit?),” which says something about her child-

¹⁰⁸ *Reminiscences*, 172-73.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 127.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 123-25.

hood reading as a Southerner — she was so thickly coated that she speculated she could attend a reception and no one could tell her absence of clothes. Although the spa doctors assured her the cure had been a success, the results were the same.¹¹¹ To endure these discomforts and then to have to put up with George's demands and pomposity explains in part her recurrent arrogance toward him. There was one interesting consequence: because she found German soups insipid, she insisted at Langenschwalbach and at other spas she visited that the soup be spiced with sherry. Out of this eventually evolved a popular soup, laced with sherry known on both sides of the Atlantic as "Lady Curzon soup."¹¹²

Relations between Grace and George improved somewhat in 1923 when it appeared that George might be the next prime minister. The great war-time coalition had collapsed in 1922 but Curzon had remained foreign secretary in the new administration of the ailing Andrew Bonar Law. George also became deputy prime minister and the driving force of Bonar Law's government. A crisis developed in March 1923, when Law appeared unexpectedly in Paris to see a throat cancer specialist; he was accompanied by the press baron, Lord Beaverbrook. At the time Grace was also in Paris on a shopping spree and staying at the British Embassy. She was among the first to learn that Law was incurably ill and would have to resign. A friend with her urged that she go at once to solicit the support of Beaverbrook, a man powerful enough to have played a role in bringing down the two previous prime ministers and whose newspapers had frequently criticized George's handling of foreign affairs. It was pointed out that she had much to gain, little to lose. Grace refused; she loathed Beaverbrook and asserted that she would not go pleading to him. Moreover, as an American, she did not like meddling in British parliamentary affairs.¹¹³ Her aloofness was charac-

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 121-22, 128.

¹¹²Often this soup is mistakenly attributed to the first Lady Curzon. For example see the Craig Claiborne article on Lady Curzon soup in the February 5, 1978 issue of the *New York Times* (section 6, 59). When asked why he had attributed it to the first Lady Curzon, Claiborne replied: "To my great embarrassment I must admit absolute ignorance apropos of the 2nd Lady Curzon" (Craig Claiborne to Russell Bryant, October 12, 1981). A recipe in the original German form can be found in Betty Wason's *The Art of German Cooking* (New York, 1967), 65.

¹¹³*Reminiscences*, 175-76.

teristic of the approach she and George took, that allowed the premiership to slip from his grasp.

Grace did not even return promptly to London, but continued her shopping "as George would almost certainly not want me to make a sudden change of plan in the circumstances."¹¹⁴ Once back in London, she readily agreed with his proposal to spend the Whitsuntide weekend at Montescute, while awaiting the royal summons. There, without any phone at their disposal, they discussed their plans for George's premiership. Among other things, they agreed that they would continue to reside at Carlton House Terrace and use 10 Downing Street only for official entertaining. Grace pledged to take her duties seriously as the wife of the prime minister.¹¹⁵ At last a telegram arrived from the King's secretary requesting an appointment the next day in London. The Curzons dutifully returned, with photographers beseiging them at every stop. At this point Grace's immediate concern was how she looked: she had a swollen right cheek as a result of an inflamed tooth.¹¹⁶ No doubt, a touch of pride that she was about to become the first American wife of a British prime minister passed through her thoughts. At Carlton House Terrace the blow fell. While the Curzons were away, George's enemies had moved quickly to convince the King that it was now impossible for a peer to run the government. An embarrassed secretary informed them that the King had decided for these reasons to pass over George for the relatively inexperienced Stanley Baldwin. George broke into tears; Grace was speechless. It was the end of a dream for both of them. Once over the shock, George sent his congratulations to Baldwin. Not having forgotten the misery of a decade in the political wilderness, he at least wanted to remain at the Foreign Office.¹¹⁷

After the crisis Grace made plans to visit Argentina. She wanted not only to check on her holdings but to contest the will of her brother-in-law, who an hour before his death had altered it so as to exclude Grace and her children from an

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 176.

¹¹⁵Mosley, 270-71.

¹¹⁶*Reminiscences*, 176-78.

¹¹⁷Nicolson, *Curzon*, 355-56.

inheritance of £4,200,000.¹¹⁸ It says something of her importance that she was entertained at her first port of call, Rio, by a banquet and reception for five hundred given by the Brazilian Foreign Office. The reception touched a sentimental note in her, and she wrote her mother that it was strange to think "of my little mother having been married and spent so much of her youth there — and that I should return to the same place in a position also to be made much of." On arrival at Montevideo she was greeted by the Argentinean President, Marcelo Torcuato de Alvear, and feted there as well.¹¹⁹ On leaving at the end of her stay, she threw a reception to which the president, the cabinet, the diplomatic corps and a large number of old friends came.¹²⁰ From a social point of view, the trip was a success. Judging from George's congratulations on the "tact and charm and the amazing success of your visit" the trip must also have been a financially successful one as well.¹²¹

By the time Grace reached England, Baldwin's Government had fallen. For the first time since May 1915 George had no governmental position. While he set about modernizing his beloved Kedleston, Grace embarked on another trip. No doubt, it proved a sombering experience since she was no longer entitled to a diplomatic passport and other traveling courtesies she had received in the past. It helped her to appreciate how much she benefited from being George's wife. In 1924 she had another reason to be grateful to George. As Chancellor of the University of Oxford, he was able to keep her two sons from being expelled for their rowdy behavior.¹²² Alfred and Hubert had grown up to be sartorially resplendent playboys, and a potential source of embarrassment. Alfred was already an avowed atheist and Marxist who saw nothing inconsistent with his left-wing views in keeping a chauffeur on call while at Balliol and in staying intoxicated.¹²³

About this time the Curzon marriage entered its third and final stage. By now each had learned to live with the other

¹¹⁸New York *Times*, December 7, 1923.

¹¹⁹*Reminiscences*, 219-21.

¹²⁰*Times*, December 19, 1923.

¹²¹*Reminiscences*, 222.

¹²²Evelyn Waugh, *A Little Learning*. (New York, 1964), 202.

¹²³Christopher Hollis, *Oxford in the Twenties*. (London, 1976), 83; Waugh, 202.

without too much rancor; and the marriage seemed to come together at last. On their seventh anniversary George wrote to her "I think we have had great happiness — if some trouble. But I don't think we need ever have any more of the latter again, and at any rate am proud of and devoted to my sweet wife."¹²⁴ Although she continued to go her own way, her account of their marriage in her autobiography suggests a change of heart at some point, most probably this one. In *Reminiscences* she wrote of this time, "now that the Conservatives were out of Office I saw more of George than at any time since our marriage. It seemed quite strange to have him joining me at the tea-table. We dined out more often. . . . This was a George entirely new to me."¹²⁵

Baldwin returned to office in November 1924. George was invited to join the government, but to his initial shock, as lord president of the Council, instead of the more important office of foreign secretary. He soon lost interest in all but the restoration of Kedleston. Periodically he heard a rumor that the King intended to make him a duke, the third of his great ambitions. Now it no longer mattered. In late February while about to deliver a speech in Cambridge, he suffered a fatal hemorrhage. Grace was not at his side when it happened, but she rushed to his rescue. No fault can be found with her conduct in the crisis that followed. To George's surprise, she nurtured him to the end, seldom leaving his side. Her wifely performance is even more remarkable in the light of the fact that Marcella, then traveling in Palestine, had become ill and was confined to a Jerusalem hospital. Grace held his hand nearly continuously for his last forty-eight hours, death coming on March 20, 1925. Although buried at Kedleston, George was given an impressive funeral service at Westminster Abbey, where his pallbearers included Prime Minister Baldwin, two former prime ministers, and the ranking member of the cabinet.¹²⁶ One observer noted, "I shall never forget the simple service and the great beauty of the bereft widow."¹²⁷ Only after all the eulogies had been said did she depart for Jerusalem,

¹²⁴*Reminiscences*, 213.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 227-29; Mosley, 285-86.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 223.

¹²⁷James, 7.

traveling on a diplomatic passport Baldwin allowed her to use.¹²⁸

Grace did not do badly out of George's will. Although the bulk of his wealth was tied up with the Kedleston Estate, he did leave her the leases to his various residences, the furnishings at Carlton House Terrace, an insurance policy worth £100,000 — though he stipulated that she use only the interest and return the policy to the Kedleston Estate in her will — and a jointure for life from the Estate of L1,000 a year "as it seems right that she could not be left without some maintenance from the estate whose name she bears," and finally his papers, books, and literary rights.¹²⁹ He hoped she would rent Kedleston from its new owner, Lord Scarsdale, and complete the restoration while giving up Hackwood. Not only did Grace not do that, she went to court and secured unrestricted right to the £100,000. Even more extraordinarily, she promptly spent £34,000 of it at a single dress maker in Paris.¹³⁰ George also left her so much of his own wealth from the Kedleston Estate that Scarsdale was soon forced to sell some of the Old Masters to pay the death duty and to complete the renovation with which George had saddled him.¹³¹

Grace discovered that there was one consolation in not having produced an heir. Although George's lesser titles in the United Kingdom peerage passed to his blood heirs, the marquessate, which was in the Irish peerage, did not and died with him. Hereafter, Grace solely bore the title by which he was remembered, unencumbered with the designation "dowager," that would have seemed so inappropriate for a beautiful widow of forty-seven. She never remarried and there is some evidence to suggest that George also made her promise not to should she fail to produce an heir.¹³²

¹²⁸*Times*, March 24, 1925; Mosley, 282, footnote 1.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, July 23, 1925.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, June 10, 1926; Memorandum by Viscount Scarsdale, May 24, 1971, in private hands.

¹³¹See *Times*, April 2, 1930; June 19, 1930; and June 26, 1930; Scarsdale also brought suit against Grace to force her to pay part of the renovation costs. She settled out of court, agreeing to contribute four thousand pounds (*Times*, March 9, 1928).

¹³²Asquith, 468. In an entry under August 28, 1918 Lady Cynthia wrote: "It is alleged that before marriage Lord Curzon had made Mrs. D [Duggan] sign an agreement promising not to marry again, as he couldn't bear the idea of a successor."

Once her period of mourning was over — nearly a year — she resumed entertaining on her usual scale. Whereas she gave no more official receptions for visiting dignitaries, she continued to entertain George's former colleagues and royal friends. In November 1926 she gave two large receptions, one of which was in aid of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.¹³³ In May 1927 she hosted a reception for the Grand Habitation of the Primrose League, of which George had been president for many years.¹³⁴ In February 1928 she gave a large dinner party "to meet the Prime Minister."¹³⁵ One of her more unusual activities during this period was running an all-night canteen for non-striking truck drivers during the General Strike of 1926. It was an educational experience for her. "I seemed to spend the whole night frying sausages, and getting my hands burnt by the hot sputtering fat because the sausages were always exploding, until a kind lorry driver exclaimed in surprise, 'Prick them, Miss — prick them!' So I received my first lesson in cookery."¹³⁶

When Marcella came out in 1926, Grace spared no expense. Hackwood and Montescute were looted to supplement the special decorations. Her guests included the King and Queen of Spain, the Prince of Wales, and Winston Churchill, who had merely intended to pay a courtesy call. So taken was he by the festivities, that he hustled Clementine out of bed, and they joined the revelry. Grace wrote of it: "Seldom have I given an entertainment that gave me so much pleasure and satisfaction."¹³⁷

She found little satisfactory in Marcella's choice of a husband the following year: Edward Rice, an untitled solicitor of limited means and gentry background. Grace had hoped for someone grander. When faced with the prospect of an elopement she capitulated and put together the wedding of the season.¹³⁸ It was an advertisement of Grace's extraordinary

¹³³*Times*, October 9, 1926; the other social was a dinner-dance for Marcella on November 22, 1926 (*Times*).

¹³⁴*Times*, May 6, 1927.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, February 3, 1928.

¹³⁶*Reminiscences*, 235.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 235-36.

¹³⁸Grace tried to break up the romance by confining Marcella to her room at Carlton House Terrace. That led to an elopement attempt. When questioned by the press, Grace asserted that the elopement rumor was "absolutely beneath contempt,

organizing skills and determination to stage a brilliant event. Appropriately enough her escort was a former prime minister, A. J. Balfour, now an earl, who more than anyone else was responsible for thwarting George's prime ministerial aspirations. The service was at St. Margaret's with Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Symphony Orchestra providing the music. The guests included Princess Alice representing the royal family, the King and Queen of Portugal, and Prince Paul of Serbia. A sumptuous reception followed at Carlton House Terrace. Grace's verdict on the festivities was not unlike those of most mothers, but one suspects there was a large element of truth in her conclusion that it was "one of the most beautiful [weddings] I have ever seen."¹³⁹ Although the marriage ended in divorce, it did produce grandchildren for Grace, and Rice saw to it that Marcella's inheritance was transformed into safe investments before the Depression.¹⁴⁰

Presumably Grace was no more satisfied with Hubert's choice of a wife the following year: Joan Dunn, the daughter of Sir James Dunn, Bt., a Canadian banker. While the ceremony was held at the fashionable St. George's Church, Hanover Square, where Teddy Roosevelt had been married, it had none of the brilliance of Marcella's. Still, it said something about Grace's status that several of her aristocratic friends came, including Margot Asquith, who had also been married in that church.¹⁴¹ The marriage lasted only two years. No doubt, Grace resented Alfred's wanderlust attitude which prevented him from attending either Marcella's or Hubert's wedding and his disinclination at this point to wed.¹⁴² None of her children inherited her talent for making and keeping brilliant marriages.

beneath notice" (*New York Times*, March 13, 1927). Bowing to the inevitable, however, she agreed to a wedding announcement being made two months later (*New York Times*, May 19, 1927).

¹³⁹*Reminiscences*, 238-39; *Times*, May 19, 1927.

¹⁴⁰Memorandum by Viscount Scarsdale, *op. cit.*

¹⁴¹*Times*, June 27, 1928.

¹⁴²Of Alfred, Grace wrote "Alfred preferred bachelor parties; the friends he liked to have at Hackwood were Robert Byron, Gavin Henderson (now Lord Faringdon), and Evelyn Waugh; one or two of my women friends would make up the party. Alfred loved traveling, especially in eastern Europe" (234). This passage from *Reminiscences* caused Waugh to scream of "Lady Curzon's untruthful memoirs. . . . She plainly accused Alfred and me of buggery" (Mark Amory [ed.], *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*. [New Haven, 1980], 521). Hereafter cited as *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*.

One of her last major soirees occurred sometime after Marcella's wedding. Interestingly enough, it had its origins in Grace's Alabama background. She gave a fancy dress ball at which Hubert's friends appeared in Ku Klux Klan robes and kidnapped the popular wife of the Spanish Ambassador, Dona Maria Merry del Val. After receiving her guests as an Egyptian, Grace slipped upstairs where a makeup expert transformed her into a bald "Negro Parson." She spent the rest of the evening dancing with her guests, only one of whom recognized her. "It was an amusing and odd experience to find myself for once in the position of an invisible hostess."¹⁴³

In the twilight of the 1920s Grace occupied herself with three other pursuits. She took much greater interest in horse-racing than before, migrating after the London season from one racing event to another. In the early 1920s she had bought her first horse from the Duke of Portland. At its first race at Ascot, it beat the King's horse in the final lap. At the time she was standing next to an amazed George V. When the King exclaimed, "What's this horse coming up and over-hauling the rest," she proudly replied, "It's my horse, Sir."¹⁴⁴ From then on her interests grew to the point that she had her own stable and trainers. She took it seriously enough to be able to discuss contemporary prices with such successful turfmen as Lord D'Abernon, as the latter noted in his diary in 1924.¹⁴⁵ Although George took little interest in the sport, he was pleased that she had rejuvenated the family's racing colors, brown and pink, and made them a frequent sight on the fashionable racing circuits.¹⁴⁶ Her greatest success occurred in 1928, when she won the Cesarewitch with Arctic Star.¹⁴⁷

The most humorous experience associated with Grace's racing period occurred off the track in 1929. One of her houseguests for Goodwood, the portly and venerable Earl of Derby — another of George's old enemies — discovered a black baby in the bath his valet had prepared for him. The image

¹⁴³*Reminiscences*, 239-40.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 147-48.

¹⁴⁵Viscount D'Abernon's Diary, entry dated October 7, 1924. D'Abernon Papers, ADD 48960, Manuscript Room, British Museum, London.

¹⁴⁶*Reminiscences*, 147.

¹⁴⁷*New York Times*, August 14, 1931.

of a crochety, bed-robed Derby making such a discovery provided much mirth at the dinner rounds of Goodwood that season.¹⁴⁸ It was stories like this, instead of the scandalous ones associated with Lady Cunard or the rude quips of Lady Astor which continued to endear Grace to her aristocratic English friends.

Another activity during this period concerned Hackwood, where not only did she have the golf course redesigned but a new shoot organized. From 1928 until 1930 her name appeared periodically in the Court Circulars as the hostess of weekend shooting parties, a new departure for her.¹⁴⁹

Hubert's desire to enter politics provided her with a third interest. In 1929 he ran as a Conservative in the solidly work-class neighborhood of East Ham. With his marriage moving toward annulment, Grace substituted as his hostess. She arrived in the borough with her French maid, her chauffeur driven Rolls-Royce — from which she campaigned — and hampers of food from Fortnum and Mason's. She enjoyed the experience until one evening when a laborer, offended by her ostentatious display of wealth, badly twisted the arm she had extended from the back seat of the Rolls. Not surprisingly, Hubert lost. He did succeed, with Grace's help, in getting elected two years later from a less solidly working class neighborhood.¹⁵⁰

The twilight of the 1920s was probably the happiest period of Grace's life. Her health was good; she was free to do as she pleased — her children were grown and grandchildren were on the way; she had abundant money and three beautiful homes in which to entertain. She was also a respected and established society member whose good friends included the kings and queens of England, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal, the prominent members of the peerage and the Conservative party. What could seem more natural than for an admirer, a Roths-

¹⁴⁸*Reminiscences*, 240. The baby belonged to one of the servants. Of this episode Grace wrote "I have never been able to solve the mystery of why she had chosen to place her baby in Lord Derby's bath."

¹⁴⁹Her shooting guests included the best shots in England. Her favorite was Harry Stonor "who was a pleasure to watch, I would choose to stand by him as often as possible" (*Reminiscences*, 233).

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 240-41.

child, to leave her part of his fabulous art collection in 1928.¹⁵¹ She seemed lucky as well. While at Goodwood in 1929 a burglar broke into the house, but he was discovered before any of her jewels or silver were lost.¹⁵²

Grace's extraordinary luck ran out in 1929. The Depression proved for her, as for the Bellamys of Eaton Square, a financial Waterloo. Having spent the bulk of what George had left her, she was largely dependent on the revenues from Argentina she inherited from Alfred to maintain her grand life style. As Argentina's economy slowly contracted from the collapse of world trade, the peso plummeted. Grace's estates were selling less produce and the pesos, when converted, generated fewer pounds sterling. To make matters worse for her the Argentinean government responded to the economic crisis by instituting an income tax.¹⁵³

There was one small consolation. The crash was delayed long enough to give one last grand reception. That was on the occasion of the unveiling of a statue of George outside Carlton House Terrace that had been funded by public subscription. When the Prime Minister, again Baldwin, showed up without a speech, she promptly informed him, "But of course, Prime Minister, I do expect a speech." She then showed him into a room where he drafted one.¹⁵⁴ Like most widows of great men, she regarded it as her duty to safeguard the memory of her famous husband.

The unveiling of George's statue occurred in March 1931. Shortly thereafter, the Argentinean government froze the convertibility of the peso into pounds.¹⁵⁵ Grace suddenly was faced with little income and numerous creditors in England demanding payment. It was a sobering experience for someone for whom money had always been abundant to face financial insecurity at fifty-three. She seems not to have bemoaned her fate. Instead, she set about putting her affairs

¹⁵¹She received several Old Masters from the estate of a long-time admirer, Baron Alfred de Rothschild (*Times*, March 10, 1932).

¹⁵²*Times*, July 5, 1929.

¹⁵³Arthur Whitaker, *Argentina*. (New Jersey, 1964), 93.

¹⁵⁴*Reminiscences*, 242.

¹⁵⁵Alberto Paz and Gustavo Ferrari, *Argentina's Foreign Policy, 1930-1962*. (Notre Dame, 1966), 9.

in order and selling what she could: her stables, antiques, the pictures from Carlton House Terrace— among which were a set of eighteenth century mezzo-tints that George had bought as a student at Oxford and had remained among his most prized possessions.¹⁵⁶ She tried to dispose of Carlton House Terrace on grounds, according to the *Times*' announcement, that she now found it "too large."¹⁵⁷ She also put Hackwood up for rent.¹⁵⁸

In the midst of the Depression, when so many others were doing the same thing, she initially found no takers for her homes and according to her *Who's Who* entry, remained at Carlton House Terrace and Montescute until 1937. The lease to Hackwood was sold in 1934. Among her last guests were Queen Mary and the Duchess of York.¹⁵⁹ Harold Nicolson, who visited her in January of that year, recorded a bleak description of what he found: "The hall, which in Curzon's day I remember bright with candelabra and tapestry, is lit by a single lamp. A bad butler; half the rooms shut up."¹⁶⁰ Through the sale of her possessions she was able to satisfy her creditors at least, according to an article which appeared in the *New York Times* in August 1931.¹⁶¹ She was spared a similar announcement in the *Times*.

In 1933 the Argentineans agreed to make the peso convertible under certain limited conditions,¹⁶² which offered hope for an improvement in her finances. In that year she returned to Argentina, where she was seen at the Colon Opera by Hudson Strode. Despite her trying times, she was still beautiful and according to him had "a smile that captured your heart on the instant." Although she was now nearly sixty, she seemed to him about thirty-nine.¹⁶³ While in Buenos Aires she received a Jubilee medal from George V who had not forgotten his horse racing friend, and who had made special ar-

¹⁵⁶*Times*, March 10, 1932.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, June 5, 1931.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, February 20, 1933. The rent was £100 guineas a week.

¹⁵⁹*Reminiscences*, 159-60.

¹⁶⁰Stanley Olson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson, Diaries and Letters, 1930-1964*. (New York, 1980), 59. Hereafter cited as *Harold Nicolson, Diaries and Letters*.

¹⁶¹*New York Times*, August 14, 1931.

¹⁶²Paz and Ferrari, 11-12.

¹⁶³Strode, 240-41.

rangements for her to receive it on the correct date.¹⁶⁴ Although the outcome of the trip is not clear, whatever improvements in her finances — if any — would only have lasted to the outbreak of war. The trip was not without its pleasures. Alfred, who was now playing an increasingly important role in her life, accompanied her. Although she was not accorded the grand reception of 1923, she was treated to a week's excursion on a private train to see the dawn come up over the Mar Chiquita. "As the sun came up great troops of flamingoes rose on the wing, until it seemed that the glow of sunrise was being repeated in every quarter of the sky."¹⁶⁵ It was her last visit to Argentina. Presumably, she could have lived well there had she been willing to settle permanently. She was not. This woman of the world had finally settled on England as home.

By 1937 Grace's London period was over. She had disposed of all her great homes and much of her treasure. She retired to the country, eventually settling in a house on the Bodiam Castle Estate George had bequeathed to the National Trust. He had retained residency rights to the Manor House for his sister and her children, little imagining it would be a refuge some day for his then wealthy wife.¹⁶⁶ The house itself Grace described as "a pleasant, sunny house of no particular style or architectural merit."¹⁶⁷ She furnished her new house, now a school, "sumptuously" according to the novelist Evelyn Waugh (an old friend of Alfred and Hubert from their days at Oxford) with what was left from Carlton House Terrace, Hackwood, and Montescute.¹⁶⁸ If she no longer had one of the choicest addresses in London as home, she did have one of the finest views from her bedroom: that of England's most beautiful moated castle. She also had Alfred's company, though with his drinking habits that might not always have been pleasant. Besides developing an interest in cultivating roses, she continued to entertain some old friends from London, and

¹⁶⁴*Reminiscences*, 117.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 235.

¹⁶⁶*Times*, July 23, 1925.

¹⁶⁷*Reminiscences*, 159.

¹⁶⁸Michael Davie (ed.), *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh*. (London, 1976), 715-16. Hereafter cited as *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh*.

in the process learned to cook.¹⁶⁹

While no longer an active member of society, her name continued to appear periodically in the Court Circular, a privilege of her rank and title. No longer are the entries about her entertainments, but as years passed largely about health problems. Initially, she lived modestly in order to afford an occasional reappearance at the London or racing seasons. As she explained to a luncheon guest, "Then my maid comes back from retirement in Harrogate, my old chauffeur takes the sign off my ex-Rolls and we live as we used to."¹⁷⁰ Even these costs eventually proved prohibitive and she ceased to be seen. On one occasion after the war she ran into the King of Spain, now in exile, who exclaimed that he had not seen her in ages. Grace replied, "Well, Sir, since I lost my fortune I have lived very quietly and seen nobody." He admonished her for such a severe response. "But that's nonsense — I lost my fortune too, but I still go about and see my friends and enjoy myself."¹⁷¹ Whether from pride or the feeling that she was now again an outsider or for purely financial ones, she ignored his advice.

The war brought trying times to her as it did for everyone else. At the beginning Alfred and Hubert, both in their mid-thirties, enlisted. Service in the ranks did not improve Alfred's drinking habits. Just before Christmas he got leave and suggested that Grace join him for dinner at the Dorchester. According to Waugh: "She came up to London, got some jewels out of pawn, bought seats at a theatre determined to do Alfred proud and sat from 8 until midnight waiting for him. At 4:30 she was awoken 'Will Lady Curzon come at once to the Slip-in [an entrance way] bringing £4.2 and remove Mr. Duggan.'¹⁷² That nightmare ended without a personal disaster. The next one did not. In 1943 Hubert became deathly ill. Grace remained by his side to the end. Waugh who was also there induced Grace to agree to let a

¹⁶⁹Where Grace lived immediately after her crash is not clear. According to Lord Scarsdale "she moved to the small house of Bodiam Manor" (Memorandum by Viscount Scarsdale, *op. cit.*), but according to *Reminiscences* (159), she did not arrive there until 1944. Her entries in *Who's Who* ceased to list any address from 1937 until 1948, excepting 1940-1942 when she was at her mother's in London, 4 West Eaton Place.

¹⁷⁰David Herbert, *Second Son*. (London, 1973), 72-73.

¹⁷¹*Reminiscences*, 136.

¹⁷²*Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, 131-32.

priest administer absolution to Hubert, a non-practicing Catholic. The ebbing of Hubert's life provided Waugh with one of his famous death scenes, that of Lord Marchmain in *Brideshead Revisited*.¹⁷³ Perhaps indicative of respect for her rank, the Argentinean and Brazilian ambassadors attended the funeral.¹⁷⁴ Another tragedy was the loss of her mother, then in her nineties, who had played such an important role in her life and was the one link she still had with her childhood in Alabama. She spent part of the war at her mother's house in Mayfair doing some war work, most notably helping to organize blood donations.¹⁷⁵ She was spared the discomforts of being bombed out of her home as were many of her old friends, Chips Channon and Lady Cunard included.

The post-war years found her comfortably settled at Bodiam. Her health held until 1953 and old age still had some pleasant surprises. Whereas Marcella had not married into the aristocracy, her granddaughter, Caroline, did; becoming the wife of the Earl of Plymouth in October 1950.¹⁷⁶ Another marriage which brought great pleasure, but which left a void in her life was Alfred's in 1954. That he was turning into a major writer of historical novels also pleased her. She had two handsome Rice grandsons and, as of 1951, a great grandson, Viscount Windsor, and in 1954, a great granddaughter, Lady Emma Windsor Clive. The one jarring note was the breakup of Marcella's marriage.¹⁷⁷

Once the post-war shortages ended, she resumed her modest entertaining at Bodiam. Of one of her dinner parties in 1953 Waugh noted, "Good food, excellent wine. I have the impression of a genial evening."¹⁷⁸ Less successful was her effort the following year to help promote the sales of Alfred's books by giving a dinner party for his American publisher, to which Waugh was also invited. Of it he wrote: "All she asked were old ladies who talked of nothing but what had

¹⁷³Waugh's biographer, Christopher Sykes, included a lengthy description in *Evelyn Waugh* (Boston, 1975, 233-35) of Hubert's death and Waugh's efforts to have absolution administered. Grace favored the idea; Marcella strongly opposed.

¹⁷⁴*Times*, October 26, 1943 and November 4, 1943.

¹⁷⁵*The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, 143.

¹⁷⁶*Times*, October 12, 1950.

¹⁷⁷Memorandum by Viscount Scarsdale, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁸*The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh*, 715-16.

Queen Mary done with the vase they gave her at Christmas 1915 and the publisher would have preferred young tarts I think."¹⁷⁹

She was briefly in the news in 1952 when she unveiled a plaque at Bodiam Castle in memory of George's generous bequest to the nation. In his speech, Harold Nicolson pointed out that but for an accident of history George would have been prime minister.¹⁸⁰ No doubt, the reference to that day at Carlton House Terrace twenty-nine years ago, when the king's secretary had imparted such bad news, brought back memories of how close she had come to making 10 Downing Street one of her residences and possibly caused her to speculate on how different her fate might have been had George become prime minister.

Her last great project was the preparation of her memoirs. After George's death she had contemplated writing them then; King George advised her to wait twenty-five years. In the early thirties she toyed with writing a biography of George, to the consternation of Harold Nicolson, then composing his splendid *Curzon: The Last Phase*. He complained that "She is a most tiresome and inconsiderate woman."¹⁸¹ She evidently did not like Nicolson's biography for when the latter read parts of it to her, "I can see that she is hurt and furious. But she keeps her temper."¹⁸² As a result of the move to Bodiam, she postponed indefinitely her own biography, eventually turning instead to the composition of her *Reminiscences*. When published in 1955, the book consisted of two parts. The first, a narrative of her life, largely centered about her marriage to George; the other, a series of chapters in which she quoted at length from George's and her correspondence. Written while in her mid-seventies her memory served her well. The descriptive passages about her upbringing, life in South America, and her first marriage were the most readable parts of the book, the passages after George's death a bit muddled in parts. Much of the book reads, as one critic suggested, like "Life in Burke's Peerage"¹⁸³ — who her titled friends were, who came to din-

¹⁷⁹*The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, 427.

¹⁸⁰*Times*, October 13, 1952.

¹⁸¹*Harold Nicolson, Diaries and Letters*, 57.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁸³E. P. Monroe in *Saturday Review of Literature*, May 11, 1957, 23.

ner, etc. It contained a few mistakes. Not only did she make her Alabama background more glamorous than it was, but she also included a photograph of "Lord and Lady Curzon at Balliol College, Oxford" (described as one that "George especially liked") that was not even of Balliol. The serious weakness of her memoirs was that she totally misrepresented the true nature of her stormy relationship with George. According to the image presented, it was an idyllic marriage. Not until Leonard Mosley's critical biography of Curzon appeared in 1960, replete with lengthy quotes from those letters she had not included, was the image corrected. Grace did present a picture of a fun-loving and humorous George in private that offset somewhat his popular image of a pompous aristocrat. Above all her memoirs were a memorial to an age of luxury and privilege that the world wars and the Depression had vanquished.

For an author's first work the book received kind reviews in the British press. The *Times Literary Supplement* called it "remarkable," observing "What a superb team they must have made — he, the proud, imposing, Augustan pro-consul, she a shimmering Tiepolo goddess."¹⁸⁴ The *Times* itself praised the book's "charm," adding that "they will certainly be drawn on with gratitude by any future biographer of Curzon."¹⁸⁵ American reviews were more restrained. *Newsweek* did note that "only a handful of living persons could have written anything like it."¹⁸⁶ The *Saturday Review of Literature* merely commented that *Reminiscences* was like reading a combination of "Burke's Peerage and the Almanach de Gotha";¹⁸⁷ it did not recognize the merit of those parts dealing with George. No review appears to have been printed in any Alabama paper though the existence of the book helped inspire a lengthy article in the *Decatur Daily* in 1964¹⁸⁸ and one in the *Huntsville Times* in 1977.¹⁸⁹ The book certainly did not sell well in Alabama and only one major public library, Birmingham, bought a copy.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴*The Times Literary Supplement*, December 9, 1955, 758.

¹⁸⁵*Times*, November 24, 1955.

¹⁸⁶*Newsweek*, April 1, 1957, 110-11.

¹⁸⁷*Saturday Review of Literature*, May 11, 1957, 23.

¹⁸⁸*Decatur Daily*, December 9, 1964.

¹⁸⁹*Huntsville Times*, June 19, 1977.

¹⁹⁰The Huntsville Public Library has had since 1977 a copy, donated by Leon Hinds. In 1981 The Wheeler Basin Regional Library (Decatur) received one, donated by Julia Leigh Crawford.

Grace's final years saw a further reduction in the scale of her life style. In 1954 after Alfred left Bodiam, burglars robbed her. Badly shaken by the experience, she decided to relinquish the manor on grounds that "it was too isolated a house in which to live alone."¹⁹¹ In *Reminiscences* she said nothing about her final home in Tilmanstone in Kent, where she completed her autobiography.¹⁹² Her health had been failing since 1953, when she underwent an operation. She was ill twice in 1954 contracting pneumonia on one occasion and had to enter a nursing home.¹⁹³ In January 1956 she made her last appearance in the Court Circular: "Marchioness Curzon of Kedleston is at present in a nursing home at Eastbourne and will be unable to answer letters for two or three weeks."¹⁹⁴ A distant relative, only fifteen at the time, recalls seeing Grace at this point, in bed with thinning red hair. She left with pleasant memories of the meeting.¹⁹⁵ Harold Nicolson also recorded an image of Grace in her twilight: "Even when an invalid on the verge of 80 she retained the glamour of her poise. Her loveliness and smile never lost their girlish quality which softened her stateliness."¹⁹⁶ She died on June 29, 1958.

In her obituary in the *Times* she was praised for being a woman "of elegance and great beauty," who conquered English high society, brought George much happiness, and made his home "once more a centre of brilliant social life; it also became the scene of fateful and historic gatherings."¹⁹⁷ Harold Nicolson wrote to the *Times* that "although she became noted as a lavish hostess she never conveyed an impression of social ambition or even eagerness." "She accepted glory with modesty, delight, and simple surprise."¹⁹⁸ The New York *Times* also printed a lengthy obituary noting that "the luxurious and well-bred world in which she moved with much distinction found her handsome and gracious."¹⁹⁹ She was only the second Alabama-born female to have had obituaries in both the

¹⁹¹*Reminiscences*, 159.

¹⁹²Hesketh Person, *The Marrying Americans*. (New York, 1961), 127.

¹⁹³*Times*, July 27, 1954.

¹⁹⁴January 10, 1956.

¹⁹⁵Telephone interview with Joanna Merrett nee Paterson (Richardson, Texas), August 22, 1981.

¹⁹⁶*Times*, July 1, 1958.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.*, July 2, 1958.

¹⁹⁹New York *Times*, July 1, 1958.

Times and the *New York Times*.²⁰⁰ Her hometown newspaper, the *Decatur Daily*, printed none, however.

In death, as so often in life, she balked George. While placing flowers on his coffin in the Curzon vault at Kedleston she found a note in his hand on a nearby shelf, which read "Reserved for the second Lady Curzon."²⁰¹ She was not amused. On still another visit the lights went out, plunging the vault into total darkness; she scrambled out, looking very white.²⁰² As Mary Leiter's coffin already had the prominent position next to George's, she decided not to be buried in the vault. She arranged with Lord Scarsdale to be interred in the adjacent churchyard in clear view of the sun.²⁰³ No doubt her desire to escape the darkness of the family vault was perhaps also caused by her fear of death and possible memories of the brilliant, white sun of her Alabama youth. The funeral, attended only by members of her family, was held July 7th.²⁰⁴

A memorial service in London followed on July 17th at St. Peter's in Eaton Square, near where she had first lived with Alfred when they moved to London in 1907. The large turnout, nearly half of whom bore titles, suggests that her lavish hospitality of yesteryear had not been forgotten.²⁰⁵ The guests included, appropriately enough, Nancy Astor, whose successful life in England had been launched at the same Court presentation as Grace's in 1907 and who was the only great American hostess in London to sail financially unimpaired through the post-war world. As revealed in her will, Grace's own resources had been reduced from the millions of pounds she had originally inherited from Alfred to a mere £10,570, the death taxes on which, £215, were probably about what she spent on cocktails at one of her grand receptions in the 1920s.²⁰⁶

To the end, Grace Hinds remained an outsider. She never

²⁰⁰Consuelo Vanderbilt's mother, Alva Smith, was the first. The Southern novelist, Augusta Evans Wilson, also had obituaries in both but she was not born in Alabama.

²⁰¹Rose, 13.

²⁰²*Reminiscences*, 156.

²⁰³Memorandum by Viscount Scarsdale, *op. cit.*

²⁰⁴*Times*, July 8, 1958.

²⁰⁵*Ibid.*, July 7, 1958.

²⁰⁶*Ibid.*, June 3, 1959.

belonged in Decatur or even the country of her father, the United States. She chose not to stay in Argentina, the country of her mother. She opted to make England her home and the place where she would prove that she was an extraordinary person. Owing to her peculiar economic base, she did not become a permanent fixture in British society. Nevertheless in her day she was an active participant and contributor to the spectacular and luxurious twilight of Europe's aristocracy. The Depression ended her role in it, and like the adventurer she was, she folded up her tent, so to speak, and with apparently no self-recrimination at her turn of fortunes, stole away. She lived long enough to witness the end of that world and the demise of many in it. At the end she recognized that she had never won George's affections the way Mary Leiter had and chose not to be buried with him in the Curzon vault. By any standards, her journey from the red clay banks of the Tennessee River to the cemetery in one of England's most beautiful estates, was an extraordinary one, and one not likely to be repeated. The *Times* review of *Reminiscences* provided her epitaph when it suggested that "Lady Curzon came, saw, and conquered English high society as one of those lovely Americans who has zestfully thrown in their lot with our ruling classes."²⁰⁷ In doing so she added an interesting chapter to the heritage of Alabama.

The author wishes to express his appreciation to the following for their help in the preparation of this article: Caroline, Countess of Plymouth; the dowager Viscountess Scarsdale; Joanne Merrett; the late Kathleen McEntire; Ann and W. H. Tankersley; Majorie Pointer Garner; Clara Berry Sanders; Sandy Herman; Laurie Freeman; Eulalia Weldon; Imogene Barns; Drs. Mildred Caudle, Sarah Wiggins, William Barnard, Ray Fowler, Omar Baker, and Lynne Mueller; Joyce Lamont; Viola Ayer; Larry Harbin; Ruth Kibbey; and Craig Claiborne of the New York *Times*.

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*, November 24, 1955.

BOOK REVIEW

Southern Businessmen and Desegregation. Edited by Elizabeth Jacoway and David R. Colburn. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982. x, 324 pp. \$27.50.

In recent years university presses have turned increasingly to the publication of collections of essays by young scholars writing on topics of current popularity. Rarely do these essays present information that is new or ideas that are stimulating. *Southern Businessmen and Desegregation* is no exception to the present trend. Edited by Elizabeth Jacoway and David R. Colburn, the book consists of fourteen essays related in one way or another to desegregation in different southern cities during the 1950's and 1960's. Some are concerned with desegregation of the public schools; some with the desegregation of public facilities; some with equal employment opportunities. Only a few emphasize the role played by southern business leaders in the various aspects of desegregation.

In her introduction Jacoway attempts to develop a thesis for the collection, concluding that while southern businessmen had a strong desire to maintain racial separation in their communities they also wished to project a progressive business image. Thus, under the pressure of the Civil Rights Movement, while not abandoning racism, "they did choose, for the first time, to place other considerations above the maintenance of white supremacy." While several of the essays, including her own on Little Rock, do support this thesis, the majority do not. For example, the authors of the essays relating to New Orleans, Jackson, and St. Augustine suggest that if any role was played by businessmen in desegregation, it was a negative one, seeking to block desegregation for as long as

possible. Writing about Greensboro, William Chafe questioned whether a truly desegregated society had been established there. He suggested that the victories of the blacks fell far short and did little more than "reflect paternalism [by the whites] raised to a new level of shrewdness and sophistication."

The essays vary greatly in their approach to the question — dealing with desegregation of public schools, with desegregation of public facilities, and sometimes both. They also vary considerably in the quality of research and presentation of information and conclusions. Generally, the research is limited, with many of the authors relying almost entirely on a few newspapers and interviews with supporters of the Civil Rights Movement. Some of the evidence presented is of questionable validity. For example, David Colburn in his essay on St. Augustine presents the opinions of anonymous individuals as fact; he even resorts to the use of hearsay obtained from interviews with anonymous persons. Several authors show only a marginal relationship between the desegregation of a community and the businessmen there. Instead greater emphasis is placed upon the roles of Civil Rights activists and local politicians.

Robert Corley's account of desegregation in Birmingham is a pleasing exception to the mediocrity of the other essays. Writing with less emotion and far more balance than the others, Corley concentrates primarily on the efforts to desegregate the public facilities of that city. His story culminates with the 1963 election of a moderate city government to replace the intransigent segregationist one which had been in power. Corley relates the roles played by several groups of businessmen as well as the roles played by some individual business leaders. To his credit he makes use of a variety of letters, documents, and newspapers and, unlike the other authors, even refers to several segregationist publications.

Though he writes well, Corley also slips into a few errors. While concluding in one sentence that the white businessmen had made "compromise proposals" regarding black employment and desegregation of downtown facilities, he contradicts himself two sentences later by stating that "they still refuse to grant any concessions." Corley also commits several er-

rors of omission. While writing of black leadership in Birmingham, he never explains who made up that leadership nor does he discuss the different views that existed among various black groups in the city. While describing the demonstrations that were initiated by Martin Luther King in April, 1963, he fails to explain why King began those demonstrations during the crucial interregnum immediately *after* a more moderate and conciliatory government had been elected to office but *before* it had taken over the actual operation of the city. Instead of explaining the reasons for King's actions, Corley draws an erroneous conclusion not supported by any of his evidence that "King's demonstrations . . . provided the catalyst for both change [in the racial policies] and the restoration of [racial] harmony." From the evidence Corley presented, one could more easily reach the opposite conclusion — that King exacerbated racial feelings, intensified violence, and made the newly elected city government's task of reconciling the races far more difficult.

Probably a sound analysis of the desegregation of southern cities will have to wait for more time to pass. Those who lived through those days as participants and those who received their graduate training during the emotional turmoil of the late 1960's and early 1970's are apparently unable to approach the subject with any real sense of balance. Sadly, most of the authors of the essays in this book are still waging a mushy and emotional crusade from their earlier years; they are not yet writing clear, crisp, objective history.

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Cotton Fields And Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980. By David R. Goldfield. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1982. \$20.00.

David Goldfield fails to make valid points and attempts to support unwarranted assumptions in his book *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980*. He

displays a unique ability to look at an elephant and see a camel.

His basic assumption is that northern cities are the standard: southern cities are deficient because they do not fit patterns established by their northern counterparts. The reasons given, redundantly, throughout the book to prove southern cities are uniquely different from cities in other areas of the country are, biracialism, colonial economy, rural values of family, and religion. Yet, Dr. Goldfield fails to show that cities in other sections of the United States are significantly different except in the area of colonial economy. The reader frequently finds himself wondering why southern cities can't be like their beautiful northern sisters.

The book is written without footnotes, which becomes a serious defect when license is used to the extent that Dr. Goldfield uses it. For example, he says, "In 1895, the *Atlantic Monthly* summarized urbanization in the New South era: 'In the Southern states the rate of urban growth is not very rapid. The people are still predominantly agricultural.'" The author comments, "And, the magazine might have added, so were the cities." If the magazine wanted to add such they would have done so. Also, in an attempt to explain lynching in the southern city, he makes these assumptions, "Although cities in the South were less likely to indulge in the regional lynching hysteria that grew during the 1890s, it is possible that the malleable urban press suppressed stories about such occurrences. . . . There was sufficient violence in the southern city to suggest that lynching was more prevalent than the statistics show." This irresponsible journalism falls far short of scholastic research. The author has a politician's ability to quote statistics to support his hypothesis that an elephant is really a camel.

Other blatant errors condemn the reliability of Dr. Goldfield's research. Let me quote, "When Martin Luther King, Jr., and his black and white followers marched across Pettus Bridge into Selma and into the troops and dogs of Police Chief Jim Clarke, an era was drawing to a close." Two blunders in one sentence. Martin Luther King marched across Edmund Winston Pettus Bridge *out* of Selma and Jim Clarke had never been Police Chief; he was Sheriff of Dallas County. His most sorely needed footnote places Bull Connor holding hands with blacks and singing "We Shall Overcome."

Dr. Goldfield's bias, utter dislike and contempt for the South, and anything of the southern tradition, is demonstrated in his phraseology "sun belt sophistry," "economic second fiddlers," "parsimonious social conscience," and "While the white community sought to destroy and confine, the black community strove to build and expand."; ". . . the white elite covertly worked to enforce the status quo," "the civilization of the South was . . . undergirded by law that, in its deepest meaning — dehumanization of Negroes — was based on murder, based on the antithesis of the meaning of law and civilization," "The narrowed southern mind. . . ."

Dr. Goldfield's enthusiasm to determine superlatives never makes clear who lives in "the most decrepit area" of southern cities. It may have been Blacks, Italians, or Mexicans.

The omission of the Fourteenth Amendment and its consequence on southern post war economy causes me to suspect bias or extremely poor research. Very little is said of the Reconstruction period as a political and economic influence of lasting significance. Its commonly recognized that economic colonialism is re-established, but Goldfield does not clearly show the process. He makes only a brief statement of Pittsburg Plus and its influence which, though inadequate, must suffice.

Dr. Goldfield sinks in the quagmire of the biracial society by trying to explain the white southerner's responsibility for the absence of black contribution to the southern city in terms of "stifled creative energies," "the waste of human capital and so much of it," the suppression of "vast potential of human energy," and "the rich black resources." However, the only example given to prove this essential and basic point was a traditionally white high school band "performing a little dance step popularized by a southern black university band." The author would have presented a much more believable case had he developed this "rich black resource," and explained, at least to some extent, why this potential has not been capitalized on at least by some progressive northern city.

The book lacks proper and sufficient research. It seems to be a spinoff from some undeveloped projects by the author. For the serious student of southern cities it seems unlikely this book will be found creditable: like too much of our media

this book is steeped in emotion. It falls far short of being adequate.

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One South: An Ethnic Approach to Regional Culture. By John Shelton Reed. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982. xiv, 200 pp. \$22.50 (cloth), \$5.95 (paper).

John Shelton Reed's *One South: An Ethnic Approach to Regional Culture* is a collection of essays centering on the South's identity and cultural distinctiveness. He finds Southerners akin to an ethnic group typified by shared cultural values, a heritage of violence, country music and humor. The author also accounts for the rise of a new Southern middle class. His analyses are designed to point out that the South is anywhere Southerners can be found, not a fixed geographic region, and to promote further sociological investigations in regional studies.

Twelve of the thirteen chapters of this work have been published previously. Reed, author of *The Enduring South*, believes the South remains as much a sociological phenomenon as a geographical one, and that it is "still a cultural and cognitive reality of considerable, and . . . increasing, importance." He pays scant attention to variation within the South or to conflicts among Southern constituent groups, all the while seeking the South as a whole. He asserts the "triumph of history over the centrifugal forces of geography and economics." Believing that the study of regional groups contributes to broader theoretical concerns in the social sciences, the author hopes that the South will survive "Urbanization and industrialization in better shape than the Northeast" because his faith is fervent that the South is "a superior place to live."

Reed insists that the South is where Southerners come from. The four sections of *One South* examine the sociologi-

cal impact of Southern studies on mainstream regional studies, the history of sociological investigations of the South, the appearance of the new middle class of Southerners, and the question of group identity. He suggests that regional identification is strongest among Southerners from the conventionally defined Deep South, and that differences between white Southerners and other white Americans are "far from negligible" due in part to ethnic and religious conformity, external threat, and mythology. Southern regional culture and local institutionalism make the South the "most distinctive of America's regional variants."

Reed assails the advocates of Howard Odum's regional sociology for "politically induced distortion of its activities" and the "almost single-minded attention to regional differences in wealth, occupational structure, and standard of living" to the disregard of regional identity or regional consciousness. Thus, he argues that the discipline failed to produce a third generation. Yet, he applauds the renewal of sociological interest in regions of the United States, partly because substantial regional differences are not decreasing and therefore must be addressed and investigated. The author holds that in the comparative study of regional social systems, contributions by regionalists will be most enduring. Though he sees the South as "the most peculiar and self-conscious" region of America, Reed calls for attention by regional sociologists to be paid to other regions because he fears the influence of localism and sectionalism which would result from attention only to the South. Furthermore, Reed's "contributions to sociology" aim at resuscitation of the "moribund field of regional sociology."

In the second section an attempt is made to find out why the South has produced so few outstanding sociologists, an effort based upon Reed's impressions, speculations and hunches. His investigation commences with a short history of sociology in the South, moves on to explain why the discipline has not fared well in the South — basically arguing that sociologists tend to examine things most Southerners don't care to have examined and that the sociological way of thinking (as a *generalizing* discipline) fails to come as easily to well-aculturated Southerners as to other Americans. Southerners like

to particularize and avoid categorical thinking by allowing for numerous exceptions and putting theories into practice as seldom as possible, or by not following through with them. This way of viewing things, according to Reed, is good for the discipline in order to bring about divisions of labor, "to tell sociological stories about particular people, particular groups, particular societies."

While considering white Southerners as an ethnic group, Reed, using factor analysis, notes that for the American South "regional identity, regional culture, and regional social pathology — all define essentially the same region." Southern "peoplehood" is demonstrated by many Southerners' accepting greater localism as the alternative to thinking in regional terms; high Southern identification follows the area of cotton cultivation and dense black population. The positive association of segregationist views and Southern identification, and the study of white Southerners may contribute to theories on ethnicity.

Stressing an earlier assumption by maintaining that many questions about ethnic group relations also apply in the context of American sectional relations, specifically that cultural differences between white Southerners and other white Americans are large, as group differences go in America, Reed uses the Contact (Stereotyping) Hypothesis to prove his point.

Section Three contains three reedited articles on Jewish Southerners, blacks and Southerners, and the South's new middle class. In the first article Reed uses secondary analysis of national sample surveys to study some aspects of the acculturation of Southern Jews, specifically demographic characteristics, political behavior and participation in organized religious life. His point is to encourage primary analysis of the subject with emphasis on ethnic group research in a comparative regional framework. His study of blacks' attitudes toward the South suggests that blacks, too, are laying claim to the label *Southerner*; however, white Southerners have changed their feelings far less than black Southerners. Thus, the word "Southerner" still basically refers to the region's dominant racial group. In trying to make the Southern upper middle class visible Reed suggests that a good starting point is an examination of *South-*

ern Living magazine because it serves as a "How-to-do-it manual" of the Southern good life; that is, it describes how to remain regional creatures in an upper middle class orientation. The South's new upper middle class, accordingly, is "intensely conscious of the place and role of their society, its economy, and its culture, in the larger world."

While discussing "The South Today," the author reiterates some of his key points: that the South and Southerners are still different from other Americans — "there seems to be something Southern about Southerners that causes them to behave in a Southern manner"; that Southern culture may help domesticated and assimilate industrialism and urbanization via religiousity and endearment to local communities; that the South displays a culture of violence because there are things worth fighting *for*; that Southerners like where they are better than any other Americans, save possibly Californians, because there are things that almost everybody wants and that Southerners have more of, namely, safe warm places and pleasant personal relations; and, that Southernness provides a substrata beneath the overlay of functional and utilitarian relationships imposed by a modern industrial economy promoted by individualism and "a nested set of communities," a way of trying to deal with how to reconcile "liberty, equality, and fraternity" in a modern context. All of these are Southern understandings in an American context, *entitled* to be set off from the rest.

Reed concludes simply by stating that the South has always been an interesting place. It is surviving without becoming boring. The author raises many important questions deserving legitimate explanations. The work is worthy of due consideration, and in some places it is "down right" amusing.

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The Only Land They Knew: Tragic Story of the American Indians in the Old South. By J. Leitch Wright, Jr. New York: Free Press, 1981. Preface and acknowledgements; maps; illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xi + 372; cloth; \$16.95.

This book is not a traditional history of the Indians of the Old South because Wright examines native-American-white relations from a different perspective. Focusing primarily on the era from the discovery period to the American Revolution, he does not confine his work to English-Indian confrontations. He devotes a significant portion of the book to Spanish-Native American encounters. Wright laments that often modern readers assume, if Spanish contributions in Florida are noted at all, that Florida means land encompassed within the boundary of the present state of Florida. In this book greater Florida includes early white-Indian relations in sixteenth century Georgia, Virginia, Alabama and Mississippi.

The major portion of the book is about the English experience of European-Indian confrontation. Here Wright attacks common assumptions that in many areas of English settlement, the English were the first and by implication the only Europeans to encounter the Indian. English relations with the Powhatan Confederacy and Indians dealing with the Goose Creek men of Carolina are especially interesting subjects in this book. Wright's unusual approach is fascinating because it proposes a different perspective.

Wright uses the word "tragic" in his subtitle and often this is dangerous. But here he has justified the use of this term. Chapter 6, "Brands and Slave Cords," is the key chapter of the book. This chapter, devoted to Indian slavery, is about the subject which plays a significant role in the other eleven chapters of the book. The pages of this volume recount the heartbreaking enslavement, often with the assistance of members of rival tribes, of the American Indian in the Old South. Wright shows that the Spanish deserved their infamous reputation for enslaving the Indian. He also emphasizes that the English enslaved far greater numbers of Native Americans in the Old South than those unfortunate Indians captured by the Spanish. The book recounts many instances of Indian enslave-

ment during the period between the 1680's and the 1730's when there was a tremendous labor shortage in the new world. Wright observes that the notorious crushing of the Apalachee in Queen Anne's War was the largest slave raid in North America.

He also explodes the myth that Indians could not adapt to slavery. In his narrative he emphasizes the close relationship between blacks and southern Indians. Many Indian cultural inventions were adapted and refined by the southern black. Contending that the southern black today is a product of close contact with Indian and white society, Wright notes that blacks continued to use adaptations of Indian cultural inventions long after the Indians were removed to the trans-Mississippi West.

He does not neglect recounting the sickening tale of European invasion, subjugation and eventual removal of the southern Indian. This long overdue, well-researched, thought-provoking book is a significant contribution to the history of the American Indian.

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Department of Archives and History, like every state agency supported by the State's General Fund, is under a 15% proration order. We regret that, because of this budget cut, we will not be able to continue publication of the *Quarterly* in Fiscal Year 1982-83.